



**STILL WETWANG'S
BEST-SELLING C64 MAG**

A FUSION RETRO PUBLICATION
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WAP! 64

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LAST DEFENDER OR OFFENDER?
OUR FAMED DEVELOPER DIARY RETURNS
NEW CIA CHIPS & MORE ARE HERE!
BOOK LOOK: RETRO GAME DEV



"WHO UPSET
FRANK
SPENCER?"

DUKE
FREY

ZIPAP 64





ISSUE 16

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It's amazing the emotions that being responsible for my new baby has brought: Joy, love, anxiety, fear, protectiveness, amazement, inadequacy, frustration, gratitude, anticipation, and a profound sense of privilege and responsibility – but enough about being Editor of ZZAP! 64 already. As my little adjustments to the byte-sized bundle of joy that is our little A5 mag begin to settle into a nice rhythm, so in turn there is less for me to tell you about them, which means I've experienced self-inflicted shrinkage (I was in the pool!) and we can get straight to the gaming goodies for hungry minds. Hold onto your rattles and let's dive straight into this snugly swaddle that is your very own new arrival!

Christian Simpson, Daditor
P.S. It's a girl and we're over the moon!



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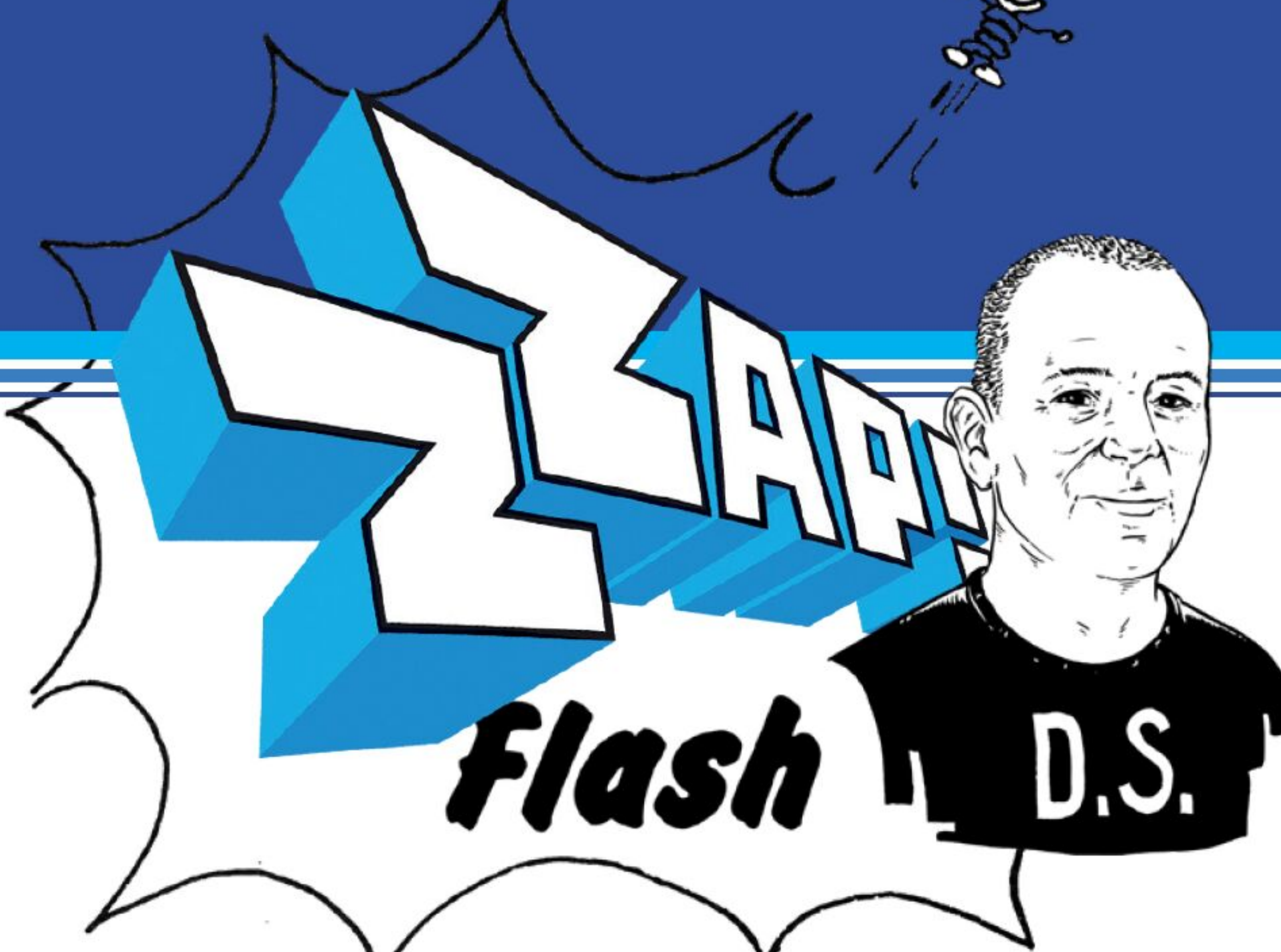
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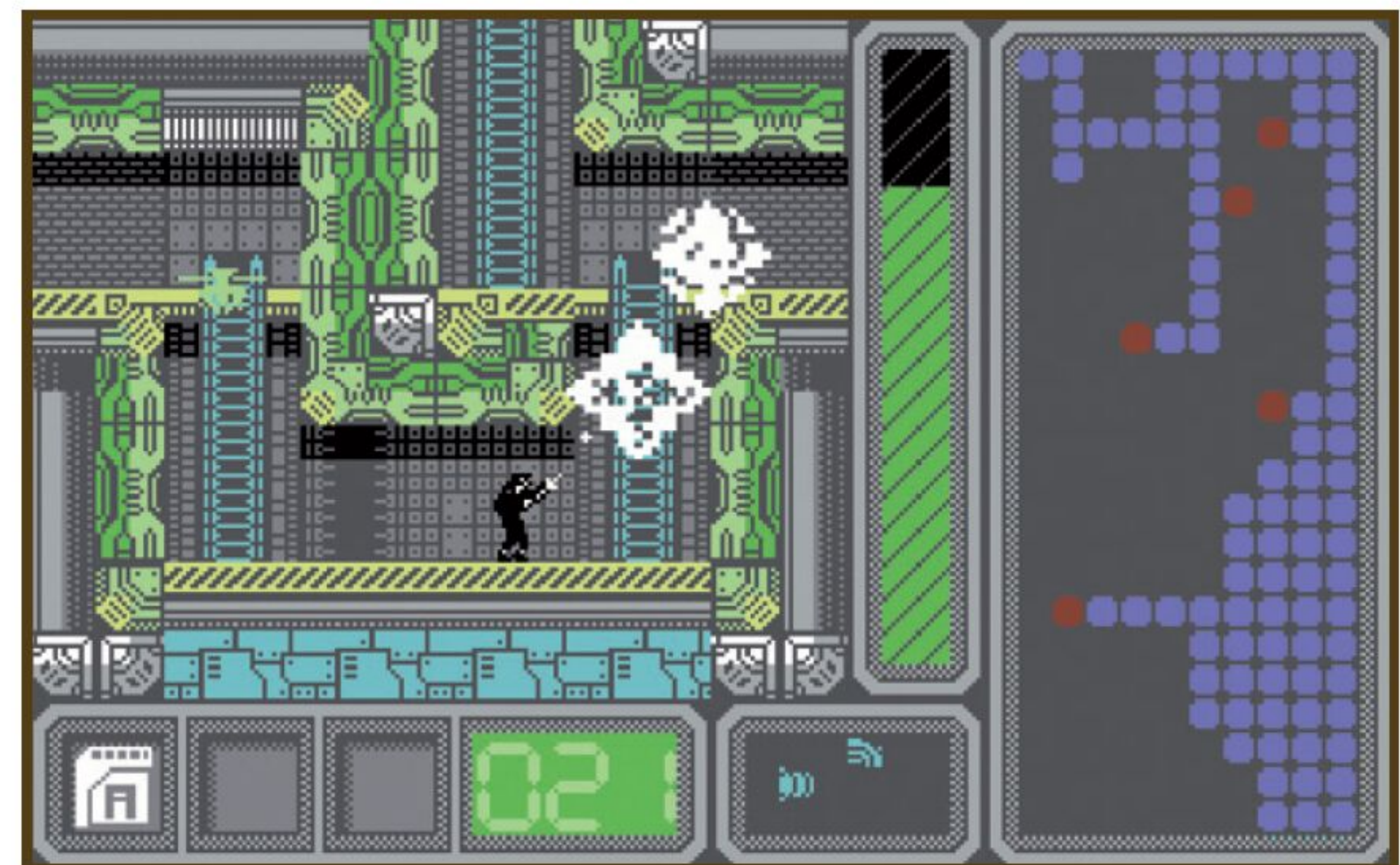


Flash D.S.

GONE? HARHAR!

Imprisoned in *Harharagon*, a jail more secure than Activision copy protection, all for having a relationship with the galactic King's daughter. We've all been there.

Your aim is to explore the 230-room prison, locate eighteen pieces of an escape pod I mean pod, and get the heell outta hee. On your way, you will battle the robotic inhabitants of Harharagon with the ability to shoot in 8 directions. Hello ladies! Shooting enemies randomly releases crystals, and collecting these will upgrade your character's weapon(!). The game will also feature an on-screen map which shows rooms explored and objects/doors you encounter.



Harharagon is being developed by **ICON64** and will be available from Psytronik Software towards the end of 2023!



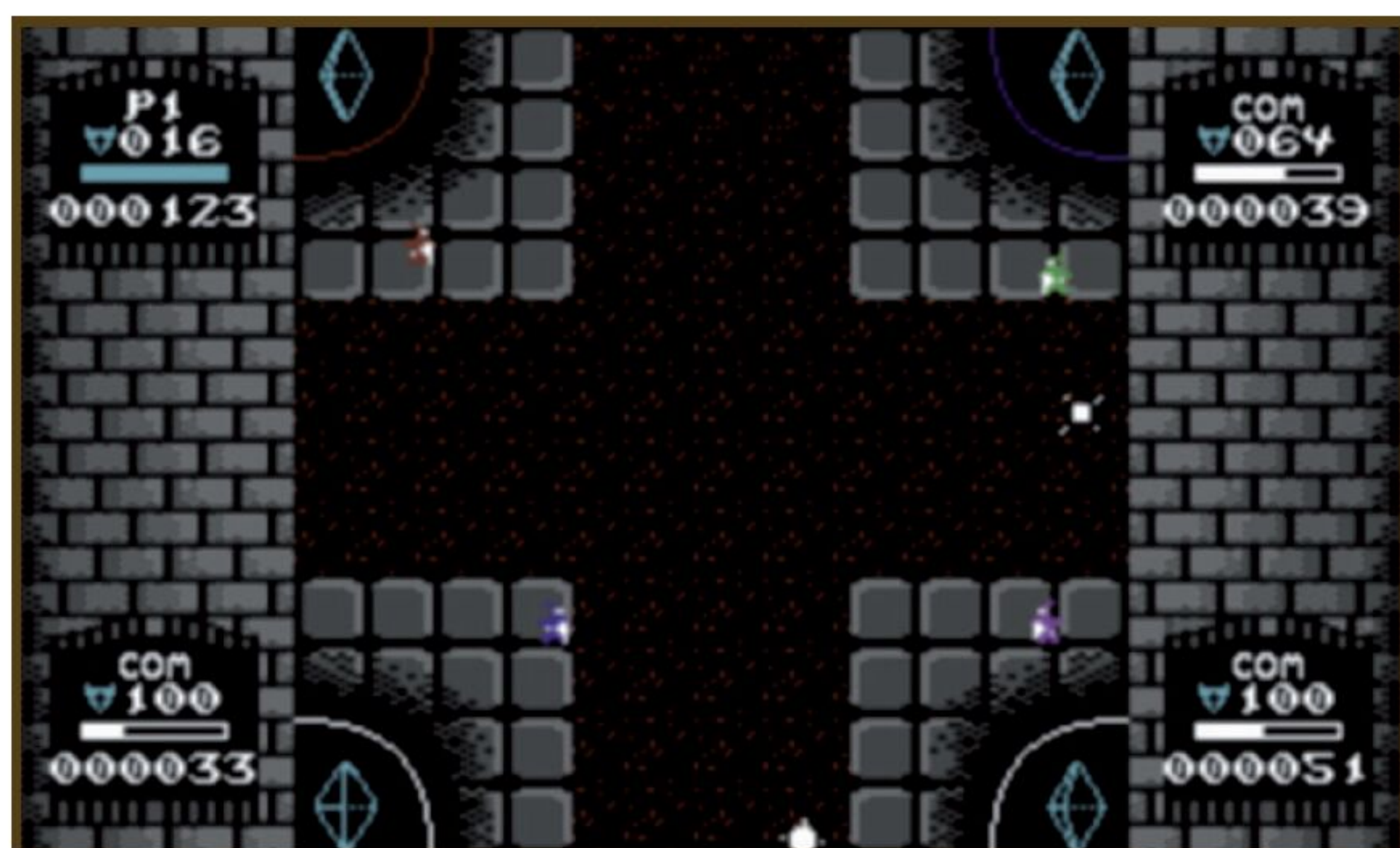


THAT'S SO WIZARD ANI!

Enter an enchanting retro-inspired game built on the magic of classic Atari *Warlords*; *Mega Wizards*. In this multiplayer experience, four mighty wizards fiercely guard their precious crystals while catching and unleashing fiery projectiles at their rivals' precious gems. Invite your friends for an epic 4-player battle, or challenge AI-controlled opponents in 1, 2, or 3-player mode!

Developed by brothers Nick (sprite, charset, level design), Tim (testing, support), and Jeffrey van der Schilden (code, music), *Mega Wizards* has had its initial outing in the form of an early access demo (available on files.mega65.org). The demo features two levels: the first level was inspired by *Warlords* where a dragon acts as the host (obviously), and the second centres around a gravity-warping black hole. Additionally, the atmospheric soundtrack composed by Jeffrey owes its inspiration to some of the classic work from Martin Galway.

Plans in the future? The game is moving surely but slowly thanks to fatherhood duties [all is forgiven –Ed] however, plans are afoot to include more 4-player adapter and controller support along with a fully-fledged release.



We promise each of these screenshots is different


 A stylized logo featuring a large, jagged 'Z' in blue and white, followed by 'AAP!' in blue, and 'Flash' in a black script font below it.
 Flash

ROCKY ON!

Rocky Memphis, the great adventurer, thinks he has discovered the entrance to the lost temple of the great King KU.

However, this time he will need help to solve the puzzles and find the fabled GOLDEN CONDOR. Wait. GOLDEN CONDOR. Sorry. Anyway, with his two mates, Spud and Jet, he has the team with the skills to complete his mission.

Close on his heels is his arch nemesis, the great French treasure hunter Russo Baluch. Can Rocky reach the treasure first? Don't ask us, that's up to you.

Rocky & Co is the sequel to *Rocky Memphis: The Legend of Atlantis* (duh!) and is heavily inspired by *The Goonies*.

In the game, you can select between three characters (hence the "& Co"), each with their own skill. Rocky has a whip, Spud is strongest, and Jet is swift on her feet.

Use a combination of the character's skills to advance through each stage until you find that golden thingy. There will be switches to pull and stand on, enemies to avoid, and lots of puzzles to solve!

The development team ICON64 (Stuart Collier – code, Trev Storey – design, and Saul Cross – who made a whopping 19 tunes for this game) have completed most tasks, so if things don't get rocky, they will be looking at a release in the next few months!

Rocky & Co will be cartridge and digital-only under the Psytronik Software label.



ROLL ON RONNY!

The PriorArt team has launched the *Ronny Rollback* project; a remake of the platformer game *Rolling Ronny*.

The idea has been around for yonks, but now the game is being redeveloped from the ground up, with expanded controls

and game mechanics, significantly more levels that are shorter too, and a revised presentation.

The development time cannot currently be estimated so let's just say, coming this century. (No guarantees.)



RANGER DANGER

A sequel to *Steel Ranger* is in early development. Guess the name? Yup, *Steel Ranger 2*!

It's a combination of exploration and run 'n' gun action; use your new generation Ranger suit, rifle,

and blade to combat a new threat emerging from the ruins of the barren Earth. Estimated release: 2024!





COVERMOUNT MADNESS

The ZZAP! 64 covermount has delivered over 75 brand-new games exclusively to its readers since it was first formatted! Welcome, dear readers, to issue 16's thrilling assortment of fresh and exclusive C64 titles for your salivation. Just don't drool on the actual disk. Let's commemorate the covermount of issue 16 with:



Tony – Born for Adventure Demo

Maciej Małecki, Rafał Dudek, and Sami Juntunen

Roll up, roll up! Actually forget that. Never roll disks up.

Moving on, this game tips its pixelated hat to the grand adventures of Polish explorer Tony Halik. Meaning from Poland, not that he used to explore cleaning products. And blimey, it's not just about style – they've gone all out with crisp high-resolution monochromatic visuals. But hey, if you're hankering for a dash of colour, fret not! There's a merry selection of pre-set colour themes to give your retinas a treat.

Fancy a sneak peek? This demo throws you right into the thick of it with the *Montezuma's Castle* level – a true taste of what's to come.

And here's a cheeky reminder: there's a smashing PDF comic tucked away with our covermount. Dive in; it's a cracker!



Monochrome Tales

Ras Bolding

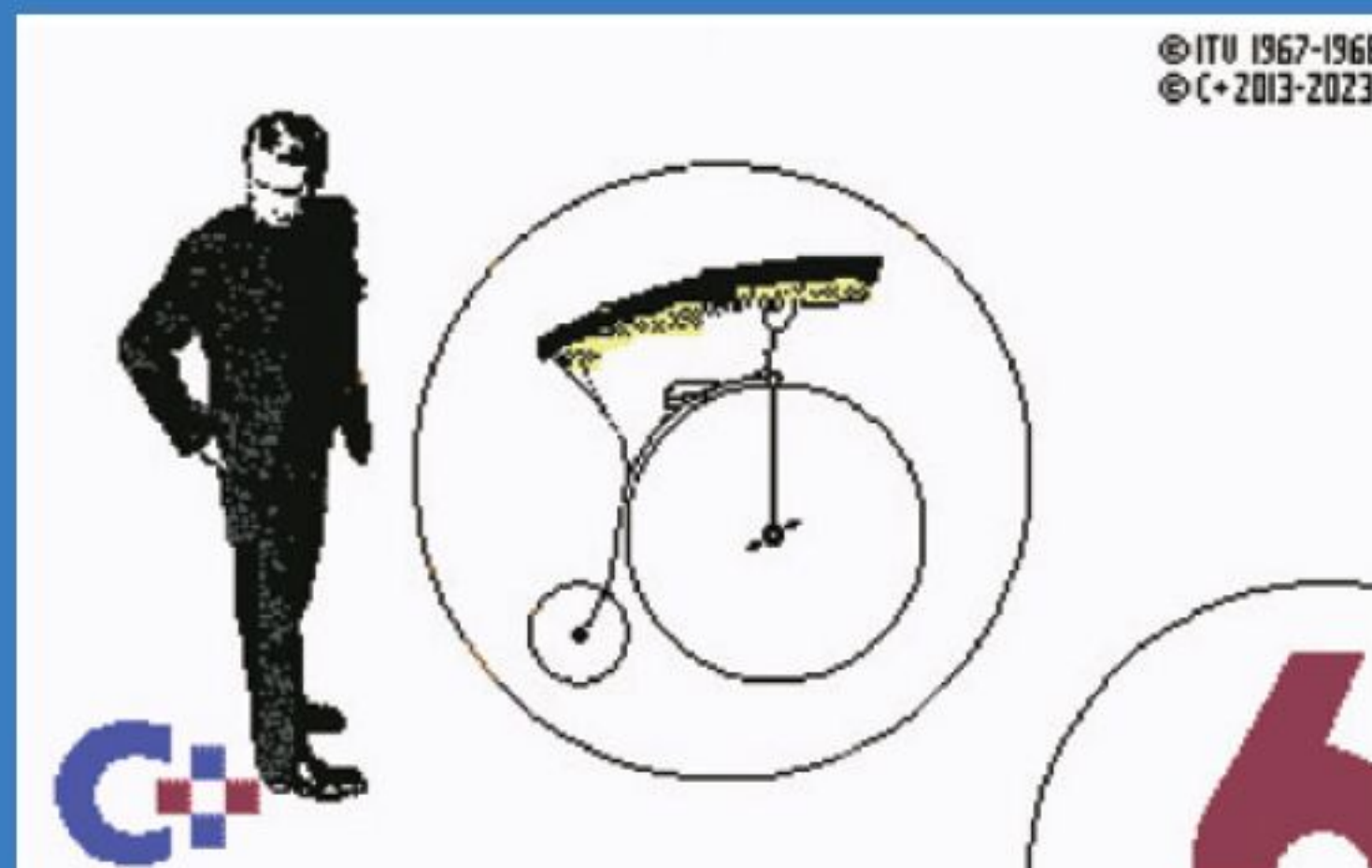
Comprising three graphic adventure games that adopt a consistent stylistic approach, characterised by black and white graphics, hence the title. However, each game features a distinct and unrelated storyline. In a nod to the night owls, these games were all whipped up on an SX-64 using the GAC tool. Seems the moonlight's the prime time for pixel perfection!



Grey Demo

Piotr Kózka

This version now includes a main menu system, higher vertical resolution, coloured ceilings and floors, intermission screens, larger levels and more!



The Prisoner (10th Anniversary Edition)

Commodore Plus

You step into the role of a former British secret service agent who, upon resigning, is drugged and transported to an enigmatic Village. There he becomes an unwitting captive, unaware of his abductors' identities, and subjected to relentless efforts to uncover the motives behind his resignation. Our main character, "Number 6", is determined to break free and unveil the identity of *Number 1*. Just be thankful he isn't unveiling his number two.



Hell Beneath Demo

Haplo

Tenebra lad's gone and done it again!

Stuck knee-deep in a right pickle. Give him a hand, will ya?

Previous covermounts are available with silver membership here fusionretrobooks.com/pages/membership-bookshelf and via subscribing here patreon.com/zzapmagazine



THE UNIQUE ZZAP! REVIEW SYSTEM

Our leg-in-dairy system makes our reviews like no other. From SIZZLERS to funky hairstyles (while stocks last) to Triple Reviewers, you saw it all here first. But in case you just ejected from your F-35, here's how we think it works, and who they think they are:

Most games have THREE experienced reviewers, avoiding a skewed result due to one berk's quirks.

The point: Learn which reviewer shares YOUR tastes and you'll know if a game is worth spending your time or hard-earned dosh on.

Every game is played expensively, erm I mean EXTENSIVELY. Once the po-pos called at ZZAP! Towers to see why the lights were on at 3am! "Sorry Occifer, we have to reach the final boss for reader Karl!". (The reviewers were still arrested as was Karl's grandma for some unknown raisin.)

Ratings are constructively HONEST. Posts on something called The Internet say, "Don't give any new games low scores!". We say "wHaT a UsefUl mAg ThAt'D bE". BUT we appreciate how amazing it is that any games are out for a 40 year-old pooter & respect ANYONE who creates ones.

Our reviewers meet up to argue for minutes about every percentage point printed, and will defend their decision with half a tape of meeting recording. Come over after 3am.

"QUITE THE MOTLEY CREW - AREN'T THEY?"



That said, we know we can't please all the peepholes all the time. We'd all do well to accept that simply, TASTES DIFFER. And that's what you'll find here. Taste. Here we'll prove it:

Andrew Fisher

Original Commodore Force contributor, Retro Gamer mag regular, C64 author, and C64 musician.

This month:

A frantic scramble to complete everything before my (delayed) operation, but still time for some Xenotilt: Hostile Pinball Action (on Steam).

Robin Hogg

Hubby to mega retro and horror collector Shelly, plane breaker, and ex-tipster slash flight sim pilot at ZZAP! Towers.

This month:

Bed-time reading The King in Yellow. Enjoying Ahsoka and hoping that people are now beginning to appreciate Star Wars: Rebels.

Mat Allen (aka Mayhem)

Original ZZAP! 64 contributor, #1 cart collector, and part of the GameBase64 preservation project.

This month:

Trying not to melt in the late summer heatwave, watching Ahsoka too, and sending my daughter out to finally start primary school.

Paul Morrison

Former MAME record holder and unsuccessful ZZAP! job applicant who finally made it, just like Newcastle qualifying for the Champions League.

This month:

Finally bought a PS5, and I've been playing EA PGA Tour. I blame the Carvers, Leaderboard got me hooked on video game golf and I still enjoy it!

Christian Simpson

Writer with a love of retro gaming so problematic he had to start a YouTube. Made Commodore retro music before it was retro.

This month:

We [changes a diaper] had [helps feed the newborn] a [burps the] baby [!]





NEWS STAND

Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: AGPX/Phobos (2023)

Link: on.mom/FbGN



Cast your mind back to the 1980s, when perms were in, you could see in the dark (via fluorescent socks), men dressed like girls, and girls dressed like boys. And you'd rush to the newsagent to purchase the latest in software. However with this being Italy not the United Kingdom, it wasn't going to be a £1.99 special off the corner shop's counter, more a "legal" compilation of games crammed onto one tape via some murky copyright laws.

And the latest tape is available, so off you trot to the news stand to purchase it. Only problem, you've lost your money, and several of your hardware format rivals and even an ex-girlfriend block your way. Navigate the platforms and hazards, avoid their attacks, try to collect enough money to buy said tape, and maybe you'll go home happy? Until the next one is released of course...



I like the personable character graphics and the backdrops – reminded me a little of a Frank Cohen game. The initial presentation draws you in, and the title music is arguably one of Richard's best to date. Unlike Andrew, I didn't have an issue with the controls. However there is a degree of insta-death about *News Stand* a la *Rick Dangerous*, and people laud that title to this day, but it didn't have the impending doom of a time limit on top of matters as this does! You will see the "game over" banner many times due to this combination, not helped by the fact the game reloads level one every time you die. Boring! There is a good game in there, especially some of the level and platform layouts – it just needs a bit more polish to excel.



TEST



NewsStand is a decent looking little platformer.

The backdrops are very nicely detailed indeed; positively bursting with colour. It's got a nice sense of humour too, which helps when you've got a pretty ferocious difficulty level to endure. And as those lives can easily go, *you'll* need a sense of humour as you go back to the loading again. Stick with it though and you can progress, slowly. I would say take your time to work through each level but the time limit will easily catch you out. It's pleasant enough with pedestrian gameplay and looks gorgeous in a vibrant, pixelated way. Enjoyable if not the most memorable of gameplay – with the exception of the drone which is a nice touch. [Okay stop droning on now –Ed]



This wasn't the style of game I was expecting – I thought

it would be more like the classic *Lemonade Stand* style of management game. But I do like the idea of the player having to find the money to buy new games. The problem with the game is how tricky it is, thanks to the tight time limit and aggressive enemies. There are clever puzzles at later stages, and I liked the variety in the background settings. But at times it was difficult to know where to go and how to achieve your goal. With more refinement, this could have really stood out from the crowd. Reading between the lines, the news is that this isn't a best-seller.



PRESENTATION: 77%

Lovely title screen, info pages, and layout, brought down by the tedious loading cycle.

GRAPHICS: 77%

An interesting if dated style, with some clever background touches and small, animated sprites.

SOUND: 83%

Old school drum-led title track, decent in-game music and SFX.

HOOKABILITY: 73%

You. Will. Die. Each screen is a new success.

LASTABILITY: 69%

Five levels to conquer with tough time limits and some unusual ideas.

OVERALL 71%

Read all about it, but as dated as the games you are attempting to buy.





Price: \$4.00 | digital

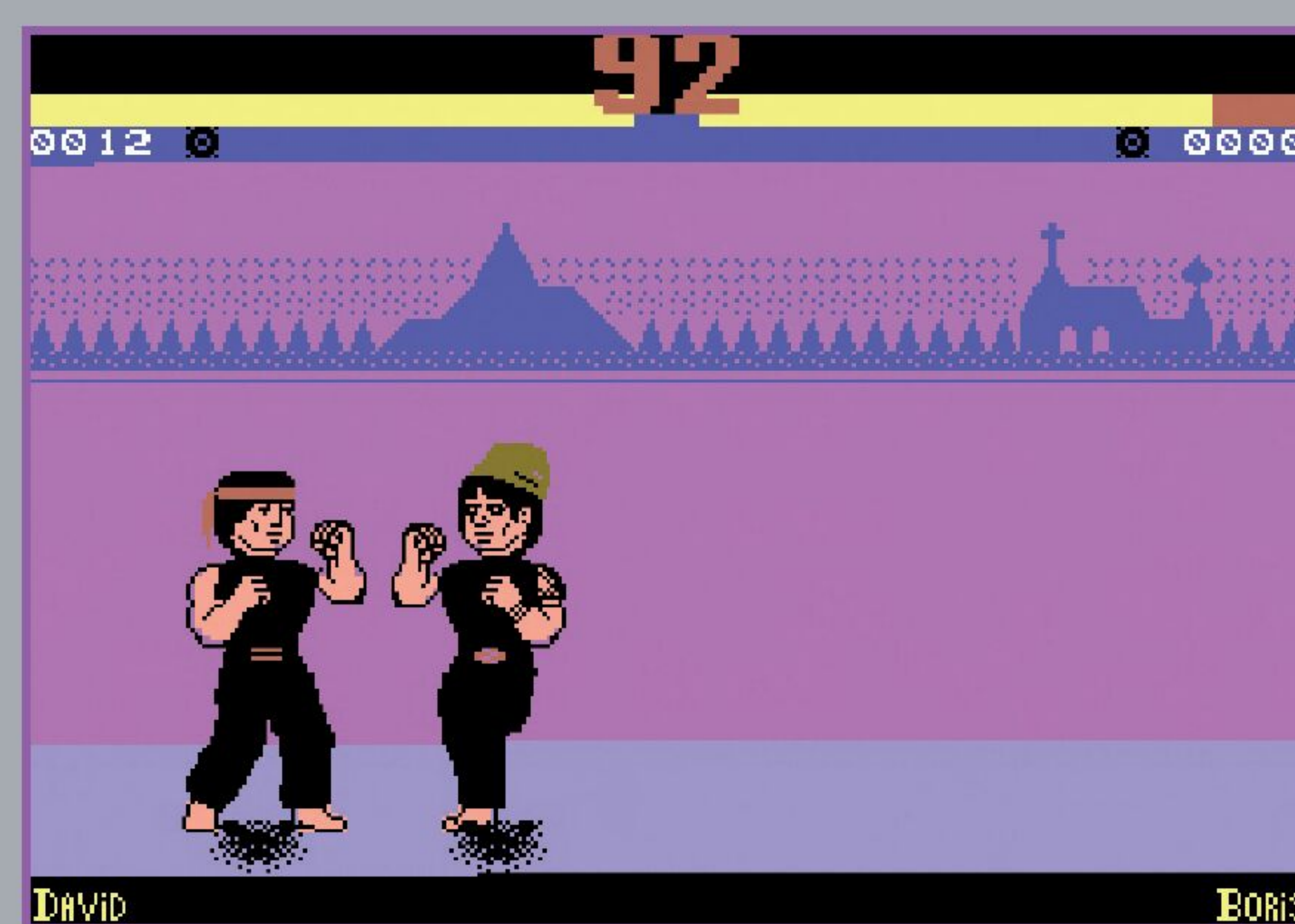
Developer: Magovinna (2023)

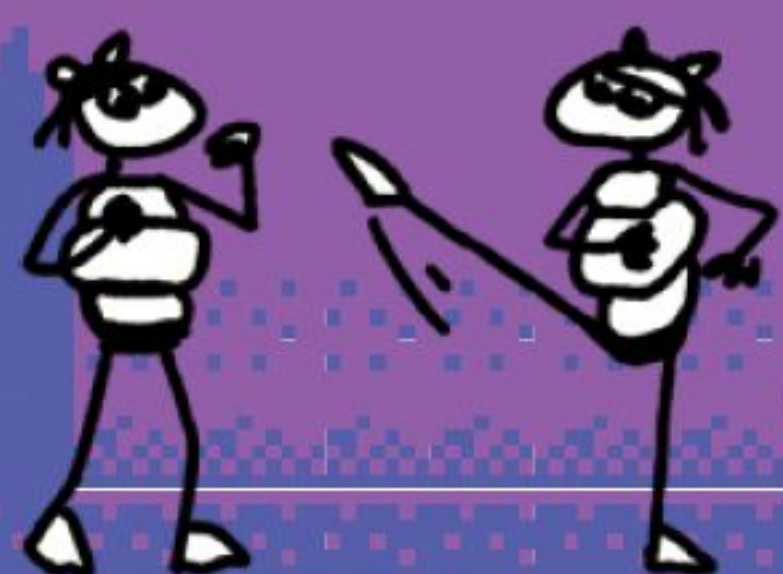
Link: on.mom/Bbno



And all the kids, they say, live to fight another day, live to fight again. Just none of the characters here sadly are called Stevie. But this town ain't big enough for the both of us, and it ain't me who's gonna leave. So time for some kung-fu fighting, moves as fast as lightning, for your right to party, and Saturday night is definitely alright.

Kick of the Spear pits six brawlers from all over, duking it out in one-on-one showdowns. Who'll reign supreme? Play solo or rope in a mate. The controls? Classic joystick wrangling with a fire button on top. And here's the clincher: each fighter's got one grand, screen-filling special move per clash. Let the battles begin!





"I AM MY OWN WORST ENEMY"



TEST



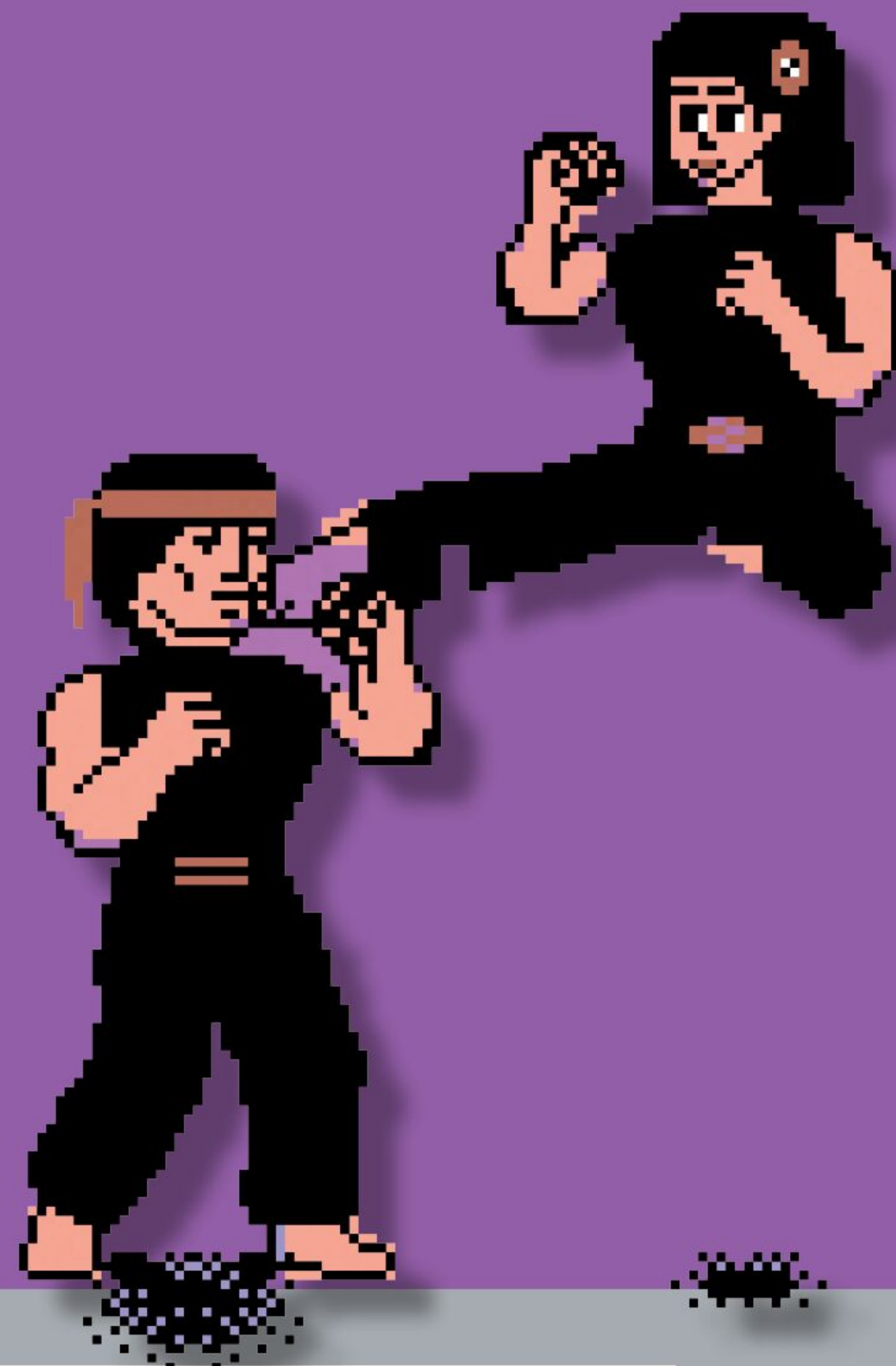
The large characters are ambitious, but can they stand tall against other classic fighting games? Sadly, the minimalist backgrounds are disappointing, and the animation stilted. The sound is limited and does not give enough force to the blows that land. Control-wise, there are only a few moves to pull off and no difference between characters – the sort of touch that otherwise makes this sort of game interesting to learn. Having said that, getting a mate round and beating them up does make this a little more fun [*erm sorry I have to cancel our hangout, I'm folding my shoes –Ed*]. But there are better beat 'em ups out there and at least one new one on the way that will outshine this decent effort – ain't that a kick in the head?



Hit me baby one more time! Oh, wrong Spears, albeit this IS a fighting game now. It is certainly ambitious in its execution, with large, animated characters – though not smooth moving, but with responsive controls. Shame the designs weren't more varied and that there are no character-specific moves. The main issue in one-player mode is the toxic "single tactic" method that pervades a lot of fighting titles (*Exploding Fist* and the foot sweep, anyone?), and once you discover it here, then you are almost guaranteed to win every match, even on the hardest difficulty. Ooops, I did it again. Two-player mode is a lot more fun but there's only so far you can go with it. Flawed, but impressive otherwise. [*Sounds like you had a Toxic relationship with this game –Ed*]



As a one-player experience *KOTS* is an enjoyable hour of beat-em-up fun, but works best as a two-player fighter. On your own it won't take you long to complete the tournament (even on hard); you'll eventually find a technique that works against each opponent, and it's a shame there's no unique moves. So all in all, eventually you will be victorious. Hurrah! But two-player mode really makes for a great time; the fun enhanced by the rapid flurry of kicks and punches swapped back and fore between, erm, "friends". Throw in the large characters and that incessant ditty playing along and you've got an enjoyable game – that isn't going to trouble *IK+* or *WOTEF* – but is fun nevertheless.



PRESENTATION: 74%

Useful character and difficulty options to choose from.

GRAPHICS: 68%

Large but clumsy sprites over bland backgrounds.

SOUND: 61%

Limited sound effects that have little impact, and an incessant (annoying even) tune.

HOOKABILITY: 79%

Initially, the game packs a punch...

LASTABILITY: 60%

...but it runs out of stamina unless you have a second player to whale on. [*I said no! –Ed*]

OVERALL 72%

Wax on, wax off – a middle-of-the-road fighter best suited for two combatants.



SHACK

REVIEW

Mat Allen et al take a first look at a game released when ZZAP! 64 was ZZAP! nothin'

ANCIPITAL

Developer: Llamasoft (1984)

One miss-a-Cippy, two miss-a-Cippy... while the Zzyax/Irata empires might be good at conquering the universe, they certainly aren't adept at stock control. Having been forced into service attacking Sothis B (see *Sheep in Space*), a bunch of ancipitals have managed to steal a light cruiser and – remembering they had been helped by the human Yak-Shoggoth in the past – sought out the Terran empire. There is a plan to attack a Zzyaxian psychedelic weapons factory, stacked with hallucinogenic tactics too extreme for humans to withstand. Which is where our shaggy elongated cranium allies come in.

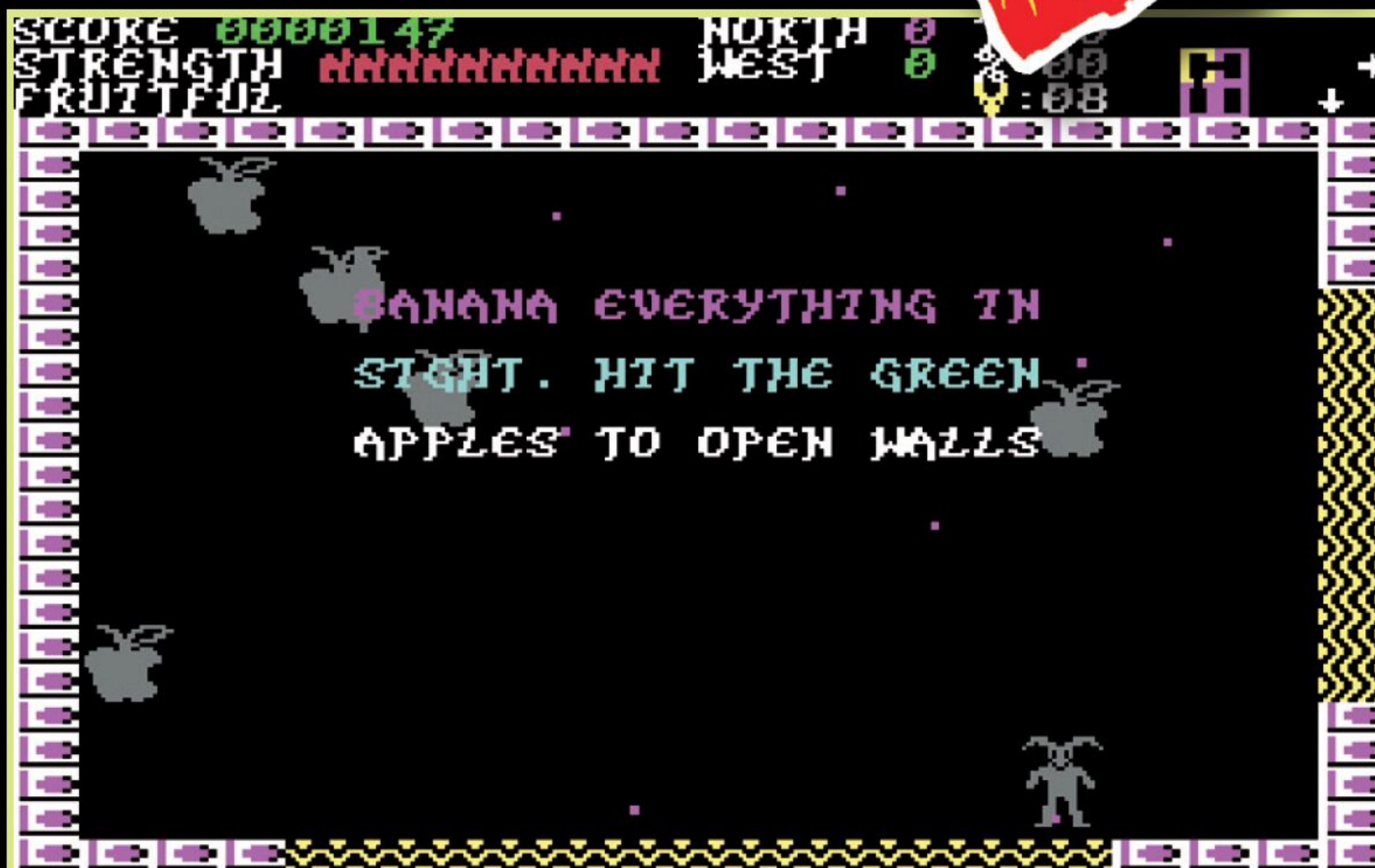
Ancipital is set over a ten by ten room factory. Within each room you must survive until the counter at the top reaches 0, and then all opened doors are available to leave through. To break open a wall and convert it into a door, well... that's for



The original release I bought failed to ever load, so had to wait until 1985's *Yak's Progress* compilation to finally play this. Not only do you have the usual sprinkling of Yak magic and zaniness, but each screen is a mini puzzle; the fact that not all of them require you to blast seven shades out of everything to open the doors elevates it above other similar titles. Death is a harsh mistress however as you side smack yet another wall in your early games, and equally harsh when you realise that as soon as you leave a room, that's it. Anything you missed is gone and you can't open any further walls there. GET THOSE CAMELS! But I loved it dearly, dearly enough to plough on through and almost complete the buggar back in the day. So it's time to sturdy your best joystick and don your shades. Just watch out for Rory the savage guinea-pig...



I too first played this on the *Yak's Progress* compilation, and it was the highlight of that package, for me. I've always loved it, and I still play it now, so when it came up for review I was very pleased, as it gave me a good reason to play it again. *Ancipital* is easy to get into, but difficult to master, with every screen having its own puzzle element as you have to figure out how to open each exit. With most screens having multiple exits, you can try a different route every time, so boredom is unlikely. For me, this is arguably Jeff Minter's best C64 game, and one of his best games ever. How about a modern remake, Jeff? Please?



you to find out how. Many will require shooting the enemies within and having them crash against the wall, others may necessitate more finesse, your progress measured by the arrow colours on the map. The factory also has four-way gravity, meaning you can jump and turn to land on any other wall present – don't get disoriented!

During your exploration you will encounter some camel keys to unlock further parts of the base, and five goat symbols that eventually let you unlock any door by simply walking on the wall. Both are needed if you are to succeed in your mission, but if you get stuck there's a hint available on each screen and you can body bomb (suicide) to open any remaining locked doors in a screen. Good luck ancipitals!

Jeff Minter on *Ancipital*:

"The name came from a series of novels by Brian Aldiss, one of the antagonist races in there was called the ancipital race, they are these bipedal, stinky, goat-like creatures, covered in thick shaggy fur. I thought these are exactly my kind of creatures! At one point we even approached Brian to see if we could do some sort of official game, but we would have to spend a lot of money to do it, so..."

One thing that tends to happen in my games is I introduce some creature, it's a lovely creature, I don't want it to be an enemy, I





"I ANTICIPATED THIS BEING A HIT!"



want it to be a friend, so I wanted to do a sequel with that creature as a friend. *Attack of the Mutant Camels*, *Revenge of the Mutant Camels*!

At the time I'd never done a platform game, it was in a period where I was being experimental, so I thought why not jump on the walls and jump on the ceiling. I was also probably influenced by games such as *Sabre Wulf* where you had a grid of locations, and mapped your way through, so created this 10x10 map, and collect the keys that were camels, of course.

I wanted to make it more than just being a shoot-em-up, I decided to try and put some puzzle elements in there, touch this or shoot that, and for god's sake don't touch Rory the savage guinea-pig! It was also the first time I experimented with algorithmic music, I wanted to have a different drum beat for each level, so I made what I call the "Phil Collins module". So that led forward into experimentation with procedural music generation which fascinated me back then and I'm getting back into right now."

(with thanks to Steinar Lund and David White for supplying the restored digital original artwork)



"SOME OF THESE LEVELS REALLY GET MY GOAT!"

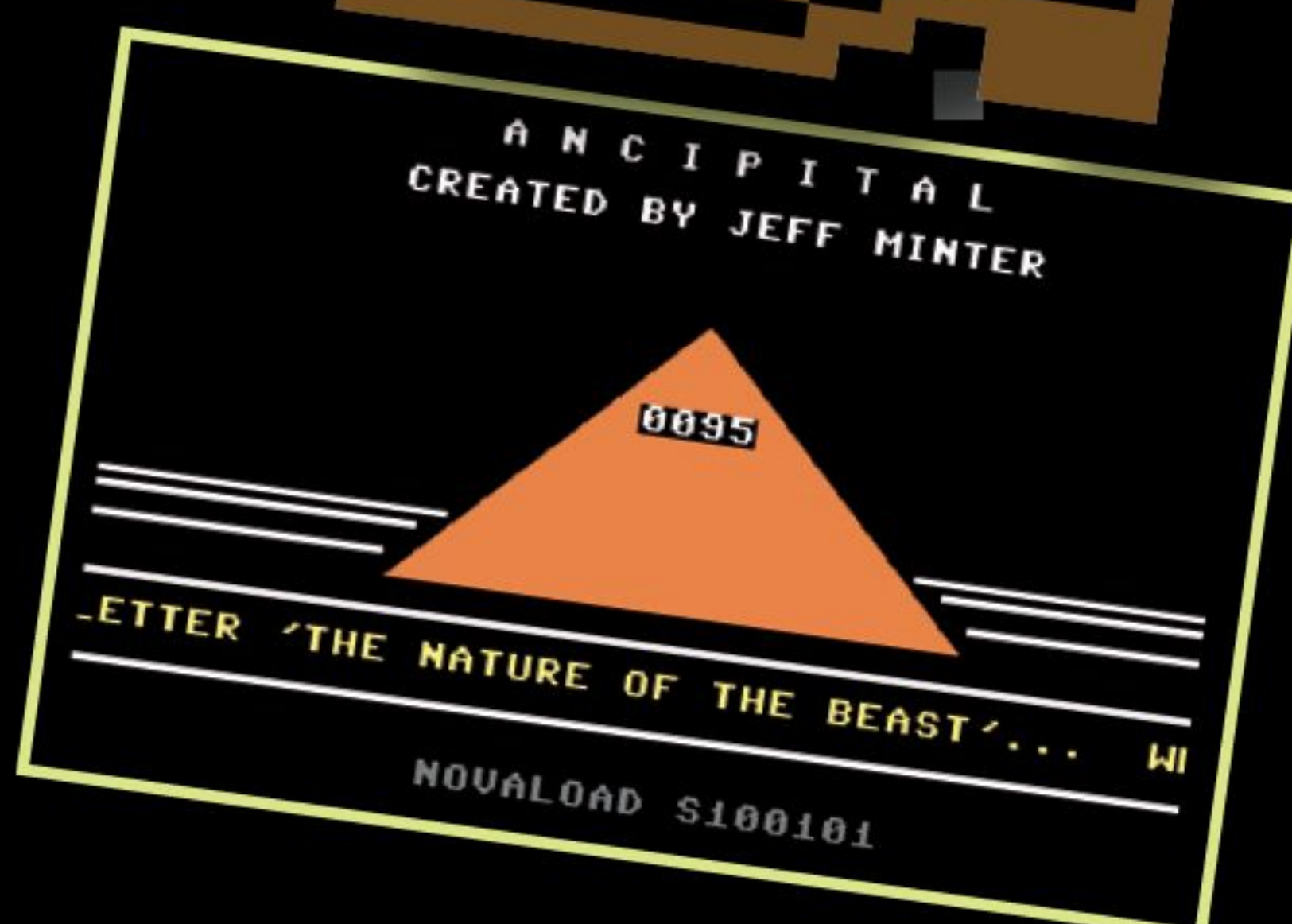


Having read the review of this game in *Your Commodore*, I still did not know what to expect when I first loaded it up. The rip-roaring drumbeats, the crazy four-way gravity and the strategies required hit me in the face – and it was a good job I could turn off the more psychedelic effects. A few familiar sprites and the Jeff Minter difference kept me playing. What makes it for me is the fact that some levels require you NOT to shoot, or to jump through objects, rather than just killing everything. That added level of thinking makes it into a memorable game, although it has dated slightly due to certain references. It's off the wall – as you run around the walls.





TEST



PRESENTATION: 90%

Humorous backstory, in-game hints, plenty of options, demo mode, and more.

GRAPHICS: 74%

If it exists, it's probably present here in glorious Yak-ovision – crazy sprites with strobes on top.

SOUND: 77%

Phil Collins drum machine and unusual raucous SFX to boot.

HOOKABILITY: 90%

You. Will. Die. But each new screen is a new discovery to unpick.

LASTABILITY: 95%

100 levels of mental chaos will take a long, long time to conquer.

OVERALL 90%

A unique experience and voyage into Jeff's psyche, all in one classic blaster.



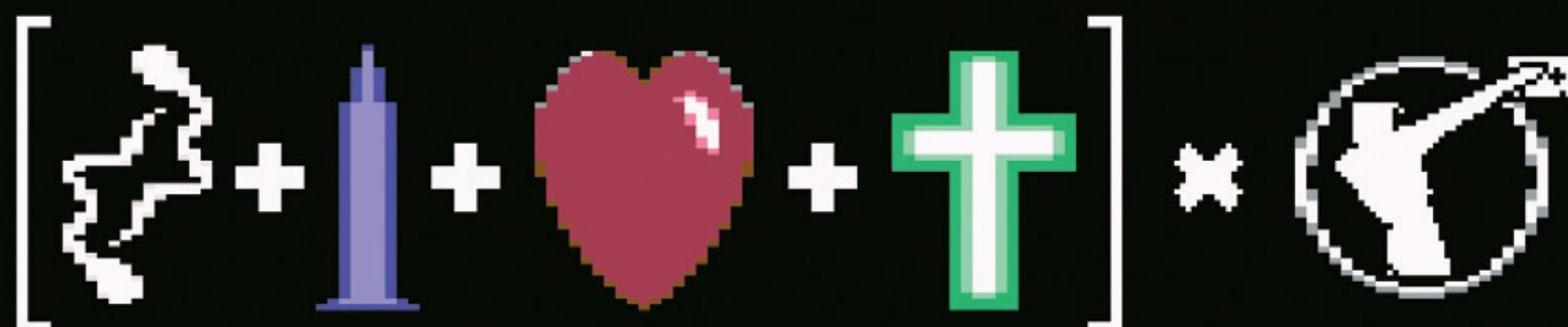
FRANKIE

You've landed back in the wacky world of ZZAP! 64 Files, where each instalment lasers in on one game, unearthing the saga as it unfurled in the hallowed pages of this here C64 mag. From sneak peeks to critiques, Graeme Mason is our Indiana Jones, raiding the archives to excavate every juicy byte ZZAP! dished out about each game. This round, our subject is the esoteric but fabulous Frankie Goes To Hollywood from those deep legends of licensing, Ocean Software.



FRANKIE

the computer game

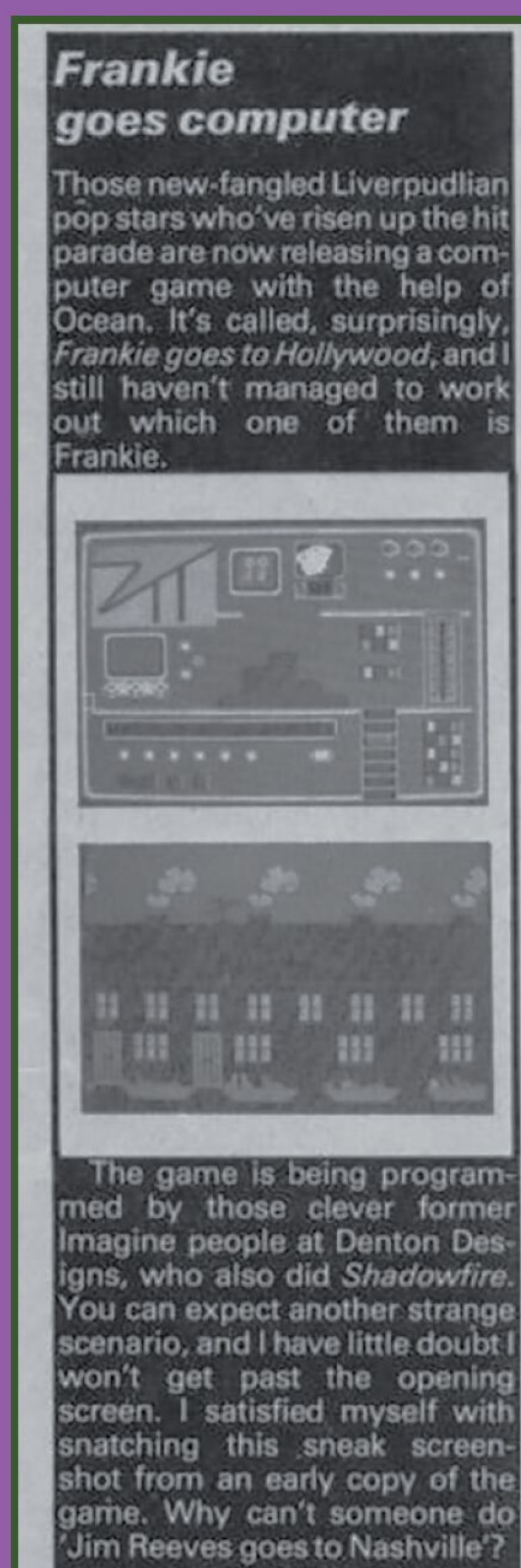


The Game

It's a licence that must have caused headaches for the team at Denton Designs – how were you supposed to create a computer game around the successful, sexy pop beats of *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*? Banned from using any of the band's likenesses, Denton's programmers devised a unique solution: to base the game around the angular figure featured on most of its record sleeves. The player guides this avatar throughout the town of Mundanesville, performing, well, mundane, tasks while trying to solve a murder. Throughout *Frankie*, mini-games pop up, allowing the player to increase one of four tenets from the band's themes: Love, sex, war, and faith. The ultimate aim is to accrue enough of these to become a 100% person and enter the fabled Pleasuredome.



News Flash

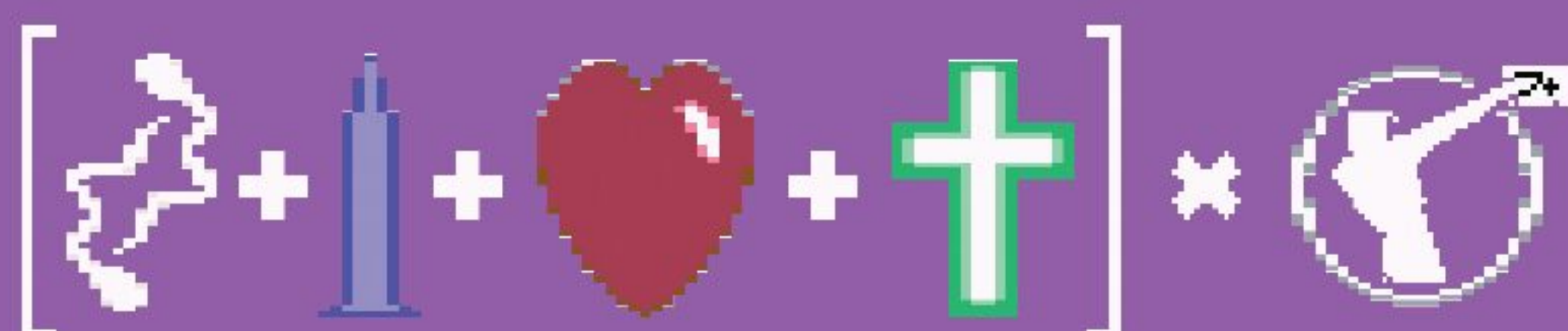


Ocean heavily promoted *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* in the build-up to its release, but it wasn't until issue three that we got to see a brace of lovely screenshots. "Those new-fangled Liverpoolian pop stars who've risen up the hit parade are now releasing a computer game with the help of Ocean," noted a somewhat befuddled Lloyd Mangram.

While excited by the upcoming release, the ever-mischievous Lloyd couldn't resist a dig at the band's odd name. "Why can't someone do *Jim Reeves Goes To Nashville*?"

Marketing

“Take a trip into the Pleasuregame,” invited Ocean in its full-page advert for *Frankie*. The game’s front cover (expertly drawn by Ocean regular Bob Wakelin) sat in the middle of the ad, with praise mainly from Spectrum magazines (ugh) below it. The game was released on the Speccy a month earlier, giving Ocean time to use quotes from its positive reviews on the C64 advertising. Hmm, let’s hope it lived up to the hype!



TAKE A TRIP INTO THE PLEASUREGAME

FRANKIE
GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

FREE! SPECIAL LIVE RECORDING OF **RELAX**

ocean

SOME ALREADY HAVE...

... innovative mix of ideas and excellent graphics ...
Variety is certainly the key word in this highly unusual game which has surely gone far beyond what anyone ever expected.
... a beautiful program, an adventure of great imagination, with some superb programming techniques ...
It's nice to see a game that can match the quality and the style of the group.
— action and strategy — and there are a number of slick touches that will keep you on your toes.

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The Review

Issue five brought our review of *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, and the reviewing team was notably impressed by the Ocean game. “This

piece of software is brilliant,” remarked our very own Hollywood-esque Jaz Rignall. “The only trouble being that once you’ve started,

you can go on forever as you get deeper into the game and just don’t want to finish.” Gary Penn was equally fulsome regarding *Frankie’s* addictive qualities: “I’ve never played anything as compelling as this – it really was a case of not wanting to turn it off once I’d started.” With equal admiration for *Frankie’s* graphics and music, how would the comments be reflected in the final scores?

SEPTEMBER

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
Ocean, £9.95 each, joystick only.

GOLD MEDAL AWARD

Here arrives Frankie, who steps into your life to give you adventures and experiences yet unimagined ... Welcome to the Pleasure Dome. You play the part of an average member of the public in Mundaneland, an average suburban surrounding. Starting devoid of personality you have to build up a character by completing the many tasks and objectives listed throughout the game. There are four factors to your personality, sex, war, love and religion and these all have to be built up to their maximum before you become a real person. You also have to build up pleasure points — these are awarded for completing objectives. The ideal score is one of more than £7,000; when you get this you usually have a 99% personality and can enter the Pleasuredome.

Being Mr Joe Public in the urban wasteland of washing machines and videos is a boring one, inspired only by the fact that if you can build up enough of a personality and become a real person then you can enter the Pleasuredome.

Playing the game is quite odd — you can walk round the streets of suburbia and enter houses, sitting rooms and kitchens at your will. In these rooms are the objects of boring, everyday life, like comfy chairs, drawers, cupboards, videos, fridges, flying ducks etc. You can feel and explore these and open them up. Sometimes ‘feeling’ an object will give you an experience and add valuable points to one of the four factors of your personality.

If you explore a drawer or cupboard then a ‘window’ will open up on screen. In this window will be a hand-like icon. Move this over one of the objects in the window, press the fire button and you can pick it up. It will drop automatically into your inventory (which you can access at any time). Depending on what the object is that you pick up, you are sometimes awarded personality points or a pleasure bonus. The objects that you collect can be used to help perform a task or may be used to lead you into the Pleasuredome maze.

Throughout the game you are presented with objectives, these happen quite strangely and unexpectedly. For example, pick up a video cassette, move to the TV/video, access the inventory, move the icon over the video and press the fire button — this will insert the video into the cassette. You can points for this and a big window rises out from the centre of the screen. You’re behind this so run round and enter the window. You have to be quite fast otherwise the window will close leaving you in front of the telly. If you do enter the window then the window grows bigger, filling the whole screen. You can then take part in whatever is happening on the screen, usually a game of some sort.

If you complete these games then you’ll gain pleasure and character points and another window will open allowing you to get further into the game (and sometimes into the Pleasuredome). If you don’t complete the game then you’ll lose points all round and be put back into Mundaneland.

You can get to two of the games by going into certain rooms and touching the posters (mini representations of the games) on the wall. Both these games are quite tricky though and unless you know what you’re doing I wouldn’t advise trying them...

THE GAMES

Sea of Holes
Move your man into the holes to wary about the screen. Getting to the bottom of this isn’t as difficult as it seems.

The Terminal Room
Penny of things to see but what to do? This time it’s got to be ‘copy’ to stick it in. A pass to pass and plenty of windows to enter. You can get there.

Cybernetic Breakout
Just a good ol’ fashion breakout but a little bit harder — there’s only one ‘brick’!

Countdown
Difficult one this ... ride from hell to heaven on a cloud to become a saint. If you complete your task then you’ll pick up something important.

Raid Over Motorcade
Shoot planes and bombs before Liverpool and Birkenhead get bombed.

Taking Heads
Reagan and Gorbachev (or should it be Gorbachev) spit it out. Go left or right to choose your politics.

Running round other people’s houses
This is quite good fun although I don’t know why they keep harping on their washing machines. Once I’d got a video I put it into the telly and was astonished to see this window thingy flow the screen. So surprised was I that I didn’t enter it although next time I did. When you start getting things wanted out you can hear what from situation to situation quite swiftly. There are many games within the game, some of which are really quite difficult. The music when you get inside the Pleasuredome is brilliant but the price on the arcade screen called ‘Pleasure Power’ is just beyond belief! The graphics are truly marvellous, with the screen filling in and out at huge speeds.

Shooting Gallery
Don’t miss a thing so take your time. Really you should free the ducks before tackling this one.

War Room
Shoot everything ... you need to be a real angel to complete this one.

Flower Power
Simply pick a bunch.

ZTT Room
You can get out of this without completing the puzzle. Solving the puzzle is very hard but you can do it with a reasonable knowledge of the multiplication of matrices.

If you manage to enter the Pleasuredome then try to map it. It becomes quite important to do so — the doors which it contains lead to all the games AND back to the outside world. You don’t

The subject matter of the game is very deep with realistic surroundings and surreal, abstract overtones, almost with dreamlike qualities, especially on the Power screen. This piece of software is brilliant — the only trouble being that, once you’ve started, you can go on forever so as you get deeper into the game you just don’t want to finish. Used for the review: Saturday night 4.30 am - Sunday night 6.30 am! This is a stunning piece of software and unless you’ve got several spare hours (like all night don’t buy it or play it!

This is a real stunner! Ocean Designs seem to be on producing some of the best Commodore games around. Shadowline was good but this is absolutely superb! Although seeming weird at first the game is very easy to get into and within a few minutes I found myself getting involved with an extremely strange sort of game. The graphics are truly marvellous with plenty of attention to detail, the sound is just superb — all my love Frankie tunes compressed and implemented brilliantly into my micro. This game is a real classic and I’d strongly recommend you buy it now!

ZZAP! 64 September 1985 29

The Verdict

Like the band's first three singles, *Frankie – The Computer Game* was an astounding critical and commercial success. "ZZAP! say... yes!" was our pithy and on-point conclusion to the *Frankie* scores, and a mammoth 99% for Hookability best summed up our excitement for the Denton Designs game. Sound followed with 98.5%, with Graphics (96%) and Lastability (95%) also scoring phenomenally. Presentation brought up

the rear with a 'mere' 92%. An overall score of 97% enshrined *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* in the Pleasuredome of elite GOLD MEDAL Commodore 64 games. Its developers and publisher could relax – *Frankie* was ace.



Searching For Frankie

We couldn't let such a major critical release go without a compo, could we? Spread over two pages, with a lovely piece of Oli Frey art to boot, Ocean offered up 50 copies of *Frankie* to whoever solved

our small wordsearch. The objective was to find 11 *Frankie*-related words, but it didn't quite go to plan. More on that in a bit [oooh, you big tease! –Ed].

Presentation 92%

Superb loading screen, excellent instruction and easy to use control.

Graphics 96%

Fabulous definition and colour all round, wonderful windows and easily identifiable icons.

Sound 98.5%

The Pleasure Dome LP comes to your micro in style.

Hookability 99%

Enforced addiction — once you start, you won't wanna turn off.

Lastability 95%

A tough and pleasurable challenge in finding your personality.

Value For Money

97%

Great new game, re-mix and price.

Overall 97%

ZZAP! say ... Yes!

FRANKIE COMES TO LUDLOW

And fifty copies of the game will leave again, as prizes in the Frankie Say Win Competition

COMP

ocean

Find these words:

ZIT
FRANKIE
DENTON
DESIGNS
RELAX
WELCOME
POWER
OF
LOVE
OCEAN
HOLLY

EMOCLEWXBTTSE
TTSXWLASSTTI
YBYAEROIHDSOK
LOVLGXHOBETN
LFLEFSNBBSVFA
ORFRANKEFIZNR
HGMROLHAEQOF
KECHNTTPUNTTK
DIWVYAZWOSLNV
AEPOALEHLWLEW
RKNNPOCCTNEDI
RRTTZVMHOOOLRE
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Address
Postcode





Frankie At The Awards

The annual ZZAP! 64 Readers' Awards appeared in April of the following year, and *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* was expected to perform well in each of its relevant categories. Up against some notably stiff competition, it finished a narrow second to Ultimate's *Entombed* in the Best Arcade Adventure Category, while its excellent tunes from Fred Gray fell to the might of Rob Hubbard's *Monty On The Run* score.

BEST MUSIC

MONTY ON THE RUN Gremlin Graphics

Despite a wide range from which to choose, Rob Hubbard's MONTY music received a clear vote of 27%. Second equal came Ocean's FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD and another Gremlin hit, THING ON A SPRING, each receiving 8% for their harmonies.

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE

ENTOMBED Ultimate

This category was very hard fought and resulted in some close placings. Ultimate's second Pendragon adventure for the 64 won out, however, receiving 15%. Breathing down its neck was Ocean's FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD, which logged 13% of the vote, while practically clambering on its back NODES OF YESOD from Odin got 12%.

Tips And High Scores



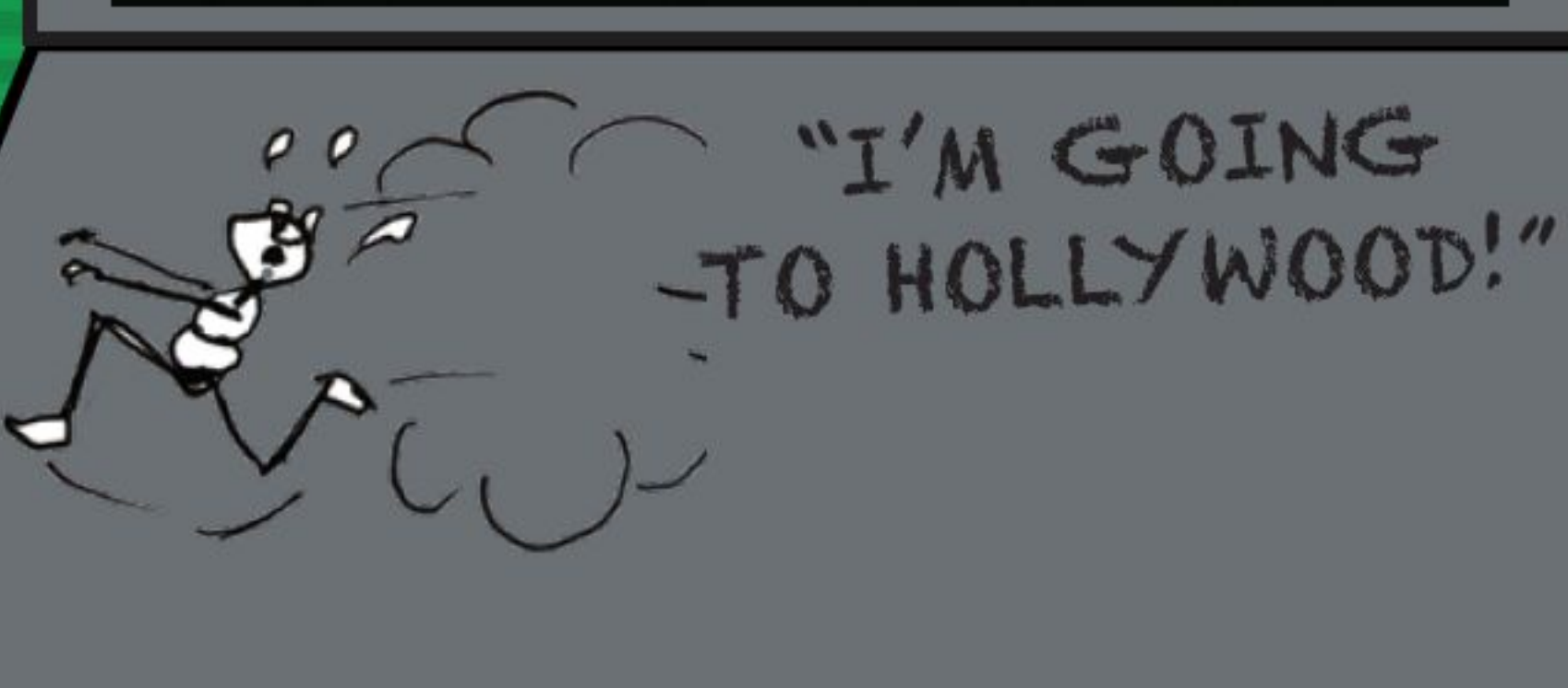
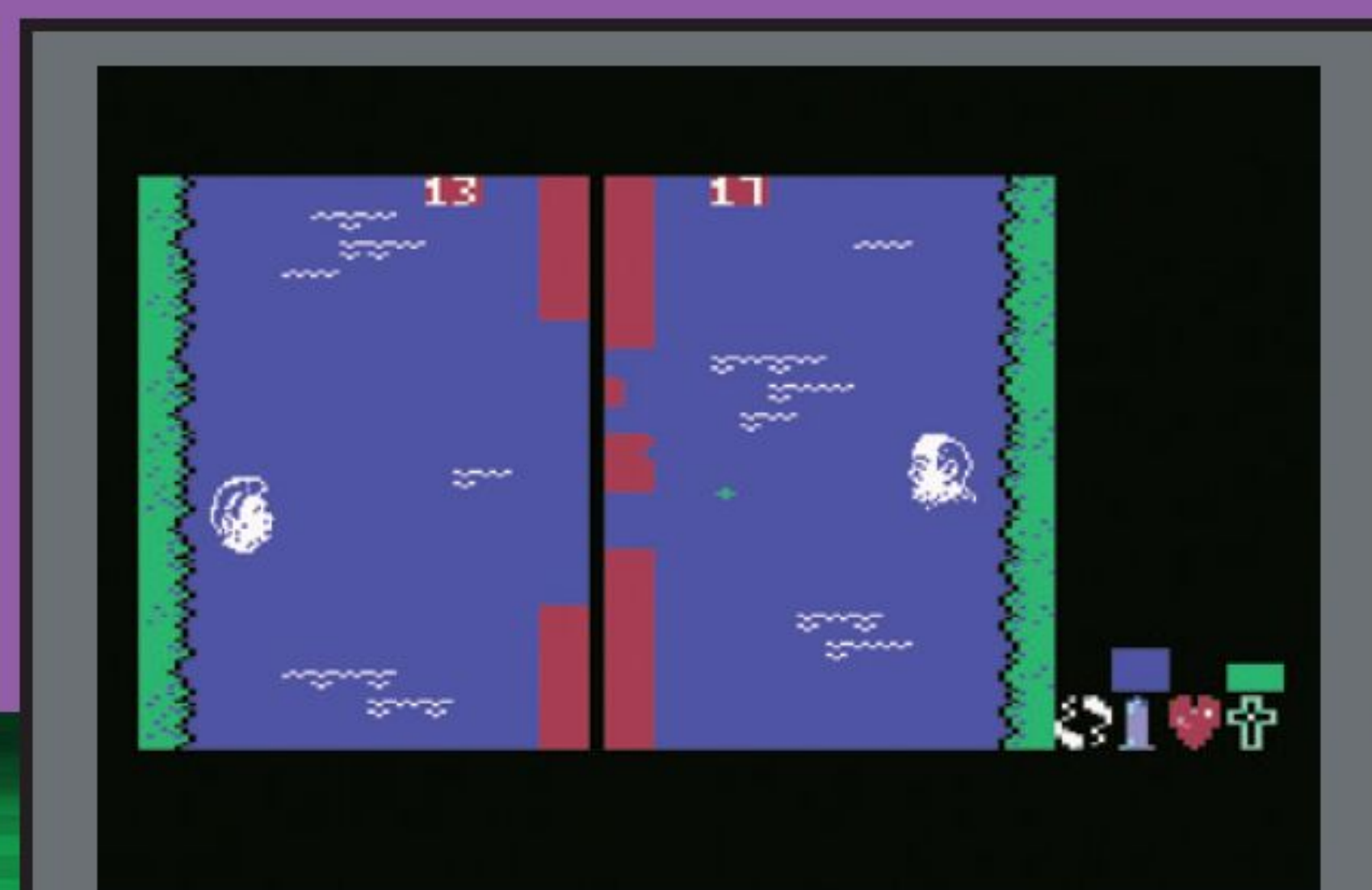
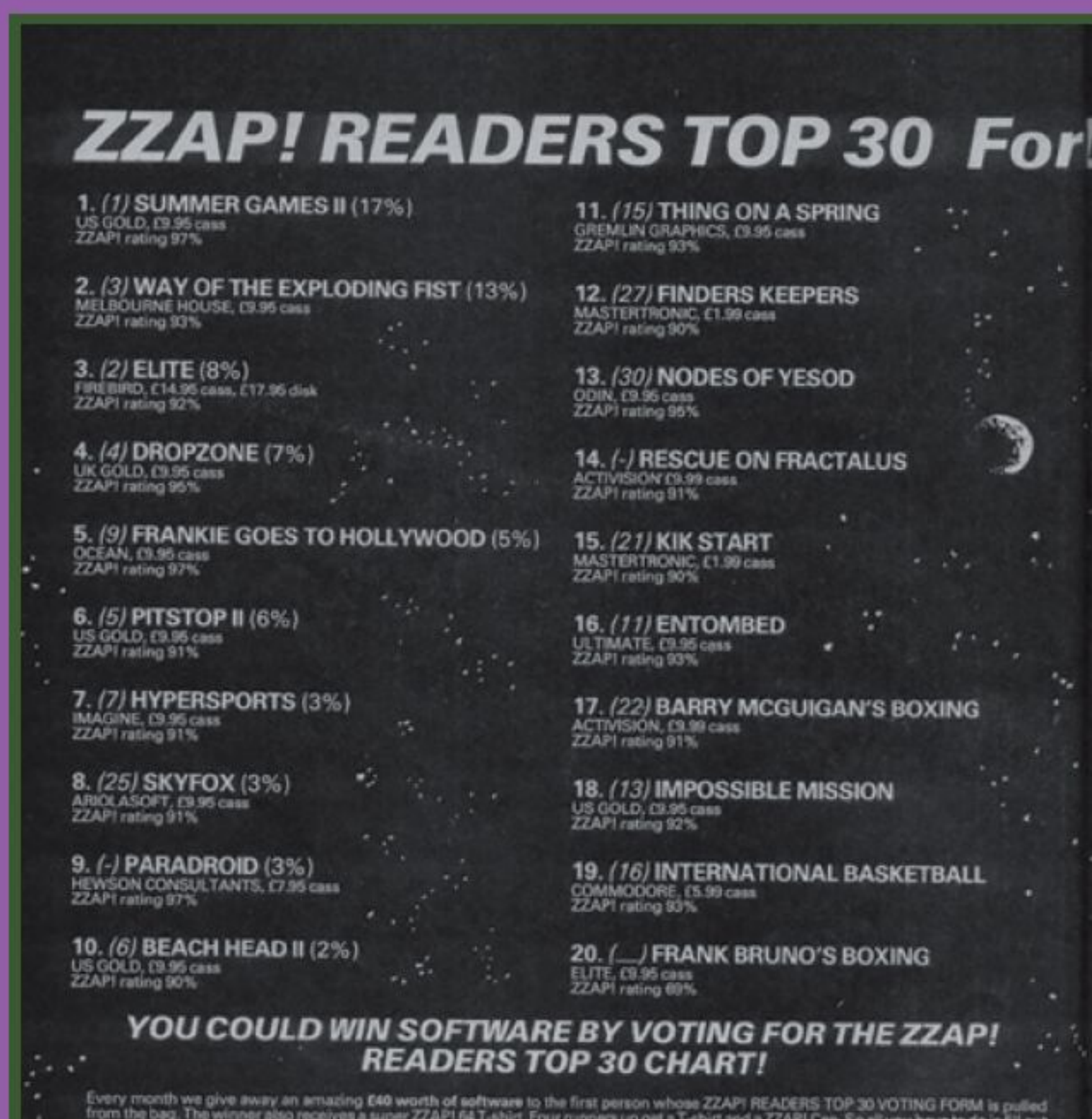
It wasn't long before puzzled *Frankie* players had some help from Gazza The Penncil, aka Gary Penn. With reader Neil Parkes, Gary presented an exhaustive guide to *Frankie's* mini-games in issue seven, including some clues on solving the murder mystery. The same issue saw *Frankie's* debut on the Scorelord page, with none other than the modest Gary Penn [who else? -Ed] sitting not-so-pretty at the top with 86,700 points. Second was Gary's fellow reviewer, Julian

Rignall, while Rachel Watson of Aberystwyth [who else? -Ed] cheekily got in on the act, with an impressive 82,600!



Farting Chrankie

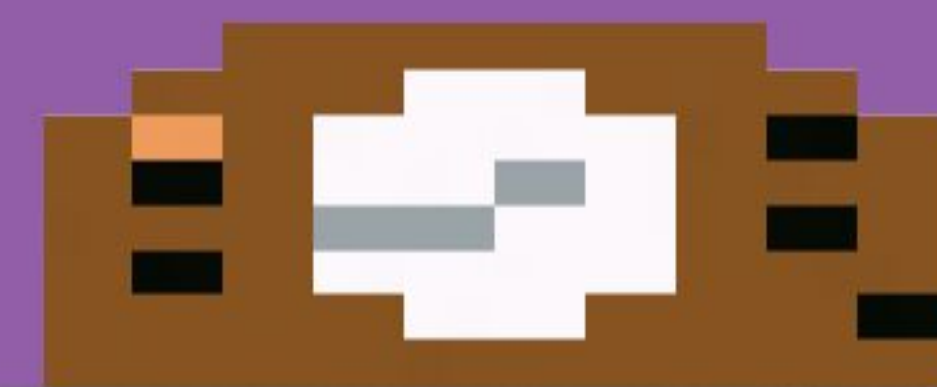
Spoonerisms aside, *Frankie* burst into the charts at number 21 in issue six – not quite emulating the band's hits, but a showing that improved to top ten a month later. It reached a high of number five in issue eight before dropping out of the chart a few months later.



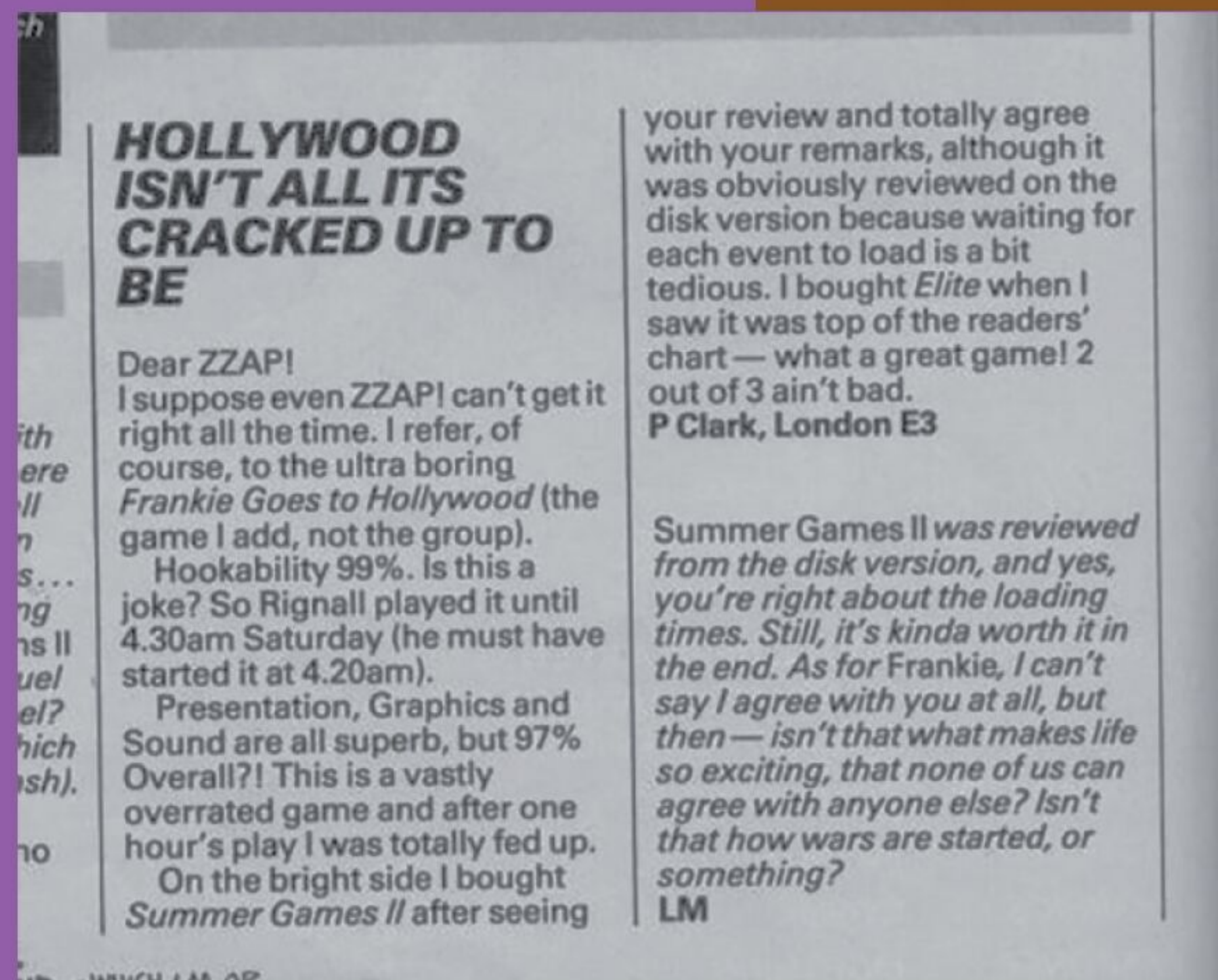


"AND WHY ARE
ED'S INTROS TWO
PAGES? OH WAIT
IT'S A5 SIZE..."

Frankie – The Backlash, Part One



Much like what happened to the band upon the release of its second album, *Liverpool*, *Frankie – The Computer Game* saw its shine dulled a little the following year. "I suppose even ZZAP! can't get it right all the time," noted a perturbed P Clark of London in issue eight's Letters pages. "Hookability 99%. Is this a joke? ... after one hour's play, I was totally fed up." Lloyd was as magnanimous as ever in the face of such scathing criticism. "I can't say I agree with you at all, but then – isn't that what makes life so exciting, that none of us agree with anyone else? Isn't that how wars are started, or something?" Well, here's hoping there would be no war over a 1980s computer



game, Lloyd... [don't tell Matthew Broderick that -Ed]

Frankie – The Backlash, Part Two

And that wasn't all. Fellow C64 coder Chris Butler also laid into the Ocean game a few months later. As part of an exclusive interview inside issue 17 of ZZAP! 64, the author of *Commando* and *Z* was asked what he would classify as a bad piece of software. "*Frankie Goes To Hollywood* is pretty grim", he surprisingly replied. "That was a good example of a bad program that was well hyped." While his dislike of the hype machine may be fairly-placed, we think Mr Butler was being a touch unfair on the Dentons' classic. On a slightly less controversial note, several

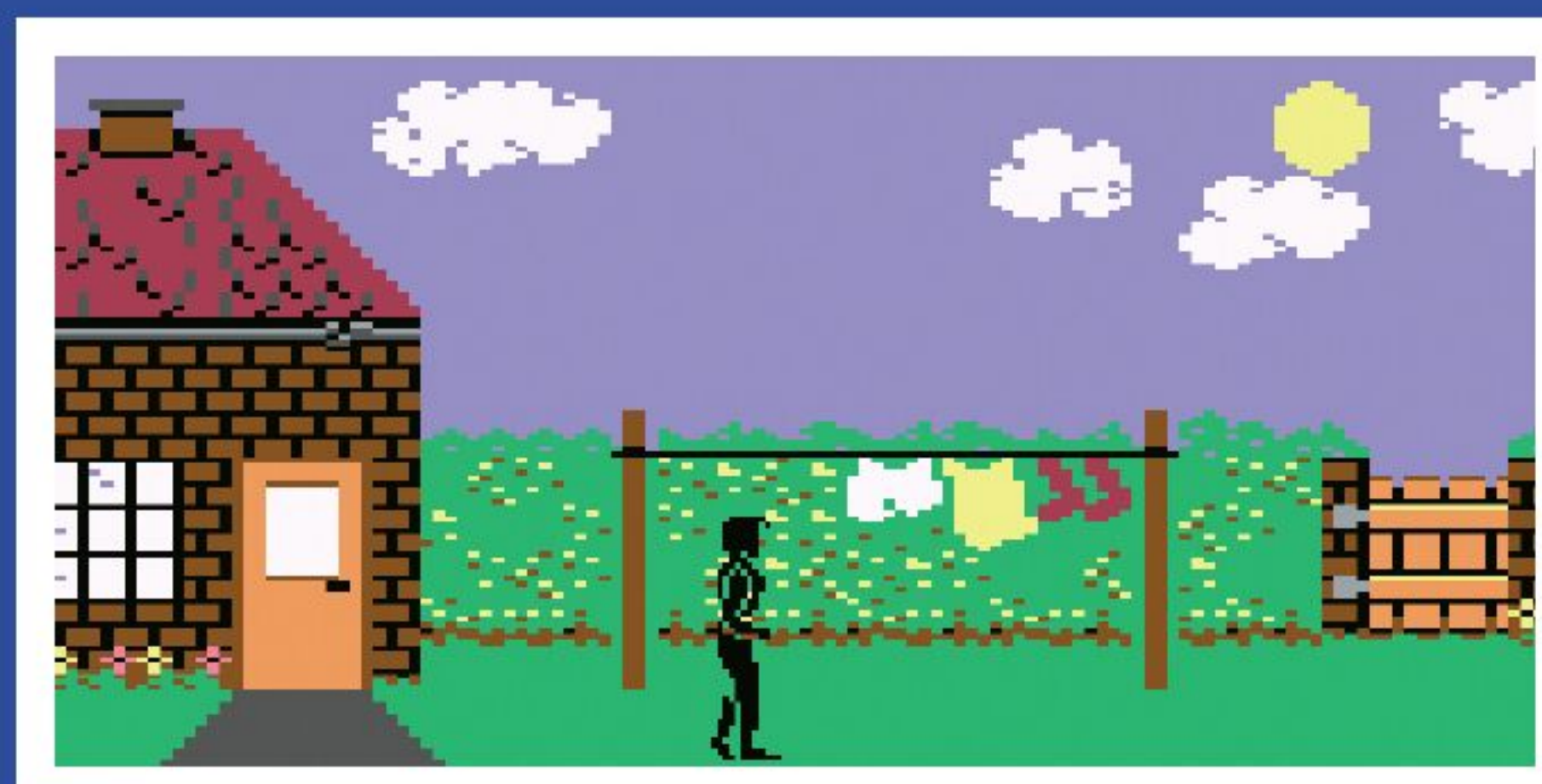
readers complained about our wordsearch competition – it seems the words 'Power Of Love' were originally meant to be found together in the grid! Their separation meant there were four 'of's to locate, making it trickier to complete. Lloyd – inevitably – blamed the art department.

Yeah, I think *Bombjack* was the same. So what exactly do you class as a bad piece of software?

Frankie Goes to Hollywood is pretty grim — that was a good example of a bad program that was well hyped. That's one thing I can't stand in this computer industry, and that's bad programs which are well hyped.

Final Thoughts

Weird, wonderful, but immensely playable, *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* remains a remarkable achievement today. Its distinctive and evocative gameplay perfectly complements the ethos of the famous band, which, combined with its excellent technical aspects, creates a simply superb C64 experience.





THE LAST DEFENDER

Price: \$ name your own price | digital

Developer: LC Games (2023)

Link: on.mom/rZZu



Flash forward to 2073, and would you Adam and Eve it? We're dealing with pesky alien blighters, dead set on mucking up our planet. Again. Grab your blaster, tilt your chin skywards, and give 'em what for! Watch as they swoop or drop their explosive packages and dodge those mine thingies – trust me, they aren't fond of a bullet or two [*Green Berets might disagree, huh? –Ed*].

Your trusty shooter's got the stamina of a goldfish, so don't go all trigger-happy. Make each zzap count, just like us. Navigate the 21 rounds and you might just see the end credits. Though if you're daft enough to opt for 'Endless mode', then it's just a matter of time before you're alien fodder.



I wanted to really like this, as a fan of *Pang*, but sadly it wasn't to be. Initially it draws you in with relatively simple attack patterns, and the gun overheating mechanic prevents the game from being a total blast-fest while forcing you to be careful with your shots a la *Galaxian*. Given the propensity for shooting upwards a lot though, I'm not sure why anyone would be using anything but control method C – in fact I don't know why that isn't the default. But it takes until level four to see the first new enemy, the bosses aren't that exciting, and the gameplay doesn't deviate at all from what you see on level one. Even the graphics and sound are below par. A missed opportunity.



LC GAMES



TEST



I have enjoyed Luca's recent "homages" to classic arcade games, but unfortunately this original title failed to engage me. On its most basic level, the mechanics are too simple. Later levels become a chore with no change in enemy type, and the bosses are incredibly boring to defeat.

The presentation is fine, the graphics have a little appeal, and the sound is very limited. But I never felt like it was becoming a must-play title, and only went back to it to finish this review. It lacks something – like power-ups, a shop to spend the bonus dollars in, and more variety in level types to be compelling. A disappointment for me when it could have been so much more.

BEST PLAYERS

RANK	SCORE	STG	NAME
1ST	13060	4	HER
2ND	10000	3	SUN
3RD	9000	3	HER
4TH	8000	2	VEN
5TH	7000	2	EAR
6TH	6000	2	HAR
7TH	5000	2	JUP
8TH	4000	1	SAT
9TH	3000	1	URA
10TH	2000	1	NEP

RECRUIT - 21 STAGES

PRESENTATION: 75%

Slick menu, with each difficulty level having its own score table saved to disk, and bonus stages.

GRAPHICS: 67%

The sprites are cute, but the background is boring.

SOUND: 47%

Simple zapping sounds and wot no music?

HOOKABILITY: 74%

The first couple of goes may not hook your bility.

LASTABILITY: 61%

There is no development or variety to compel the player to keep defending, unfortunately.

OVERALL 67%

To answer our cover question, Frank Spencer was right to be upset, as *Last Defender* is a bit of an offender. Less of an invasion from above, more of a damp squib down below.

A Pig Quest

Developer Diary

We sizzled up the 'developer diary' idea back in ZZAP! 64 issue 3, and it was such a ham-tastic hit that we've decided to grill it up again some 40 years later. We also trotted in at first place when it came to previewing

would-be GOLD MEDAL winner A Pig Quest in our Ed's juicy interview with its creator some fourteen issues ago, and now we're going whole hog with a developer diary from the bacon-loving Antonio Savona himself!

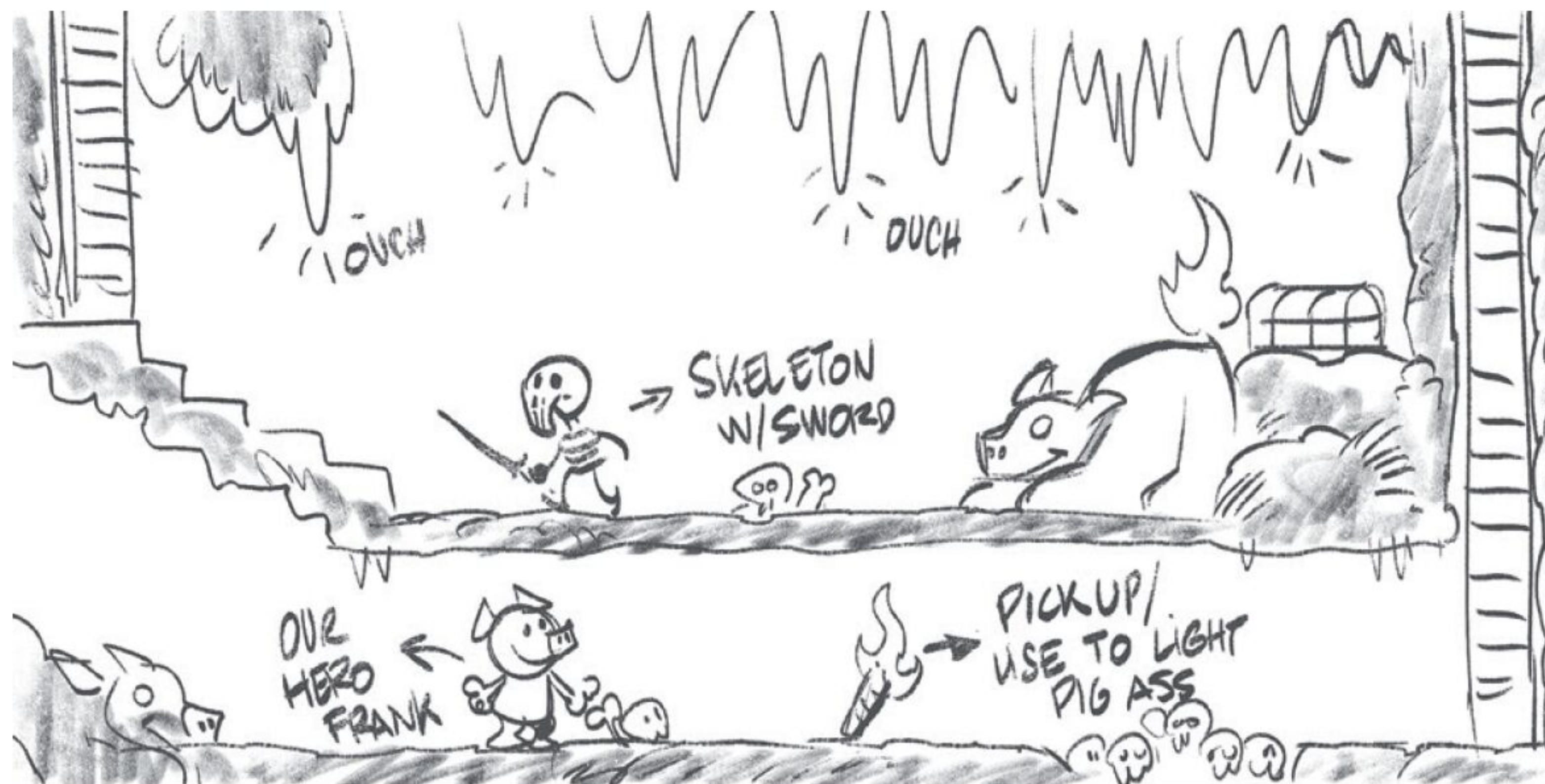
"GOLD MEDAL?
MORE LIKE
PORK MEDALLION"



It was a typical cloudy Sunday when I received this email from Alain Mauricet, who said he had this idea for a C64 game, done completely in bitmap mode to allow for more colours on screen. He said he had played *Fix It Felix Jr* and thought I was the right person for the job.

I won't lie, anyone who can do C64 assembly receives lots of requests, typically from people who want to fulfil their childhood dream. Something hard not to relate to as usually they don't bring anything practical to the table other than their enthusiasm and the dream itself.

Still, I never say no to anyone because you never know where the next great idea might come from! Furthermore, this Belgian guy claimed he could do graphics, so I said, "show me something, and I'm sure we can do something together". This is where 99% of the 'applicants' usually disappear, and I thought this would have been another one of those cases. Boy, was I wrong!

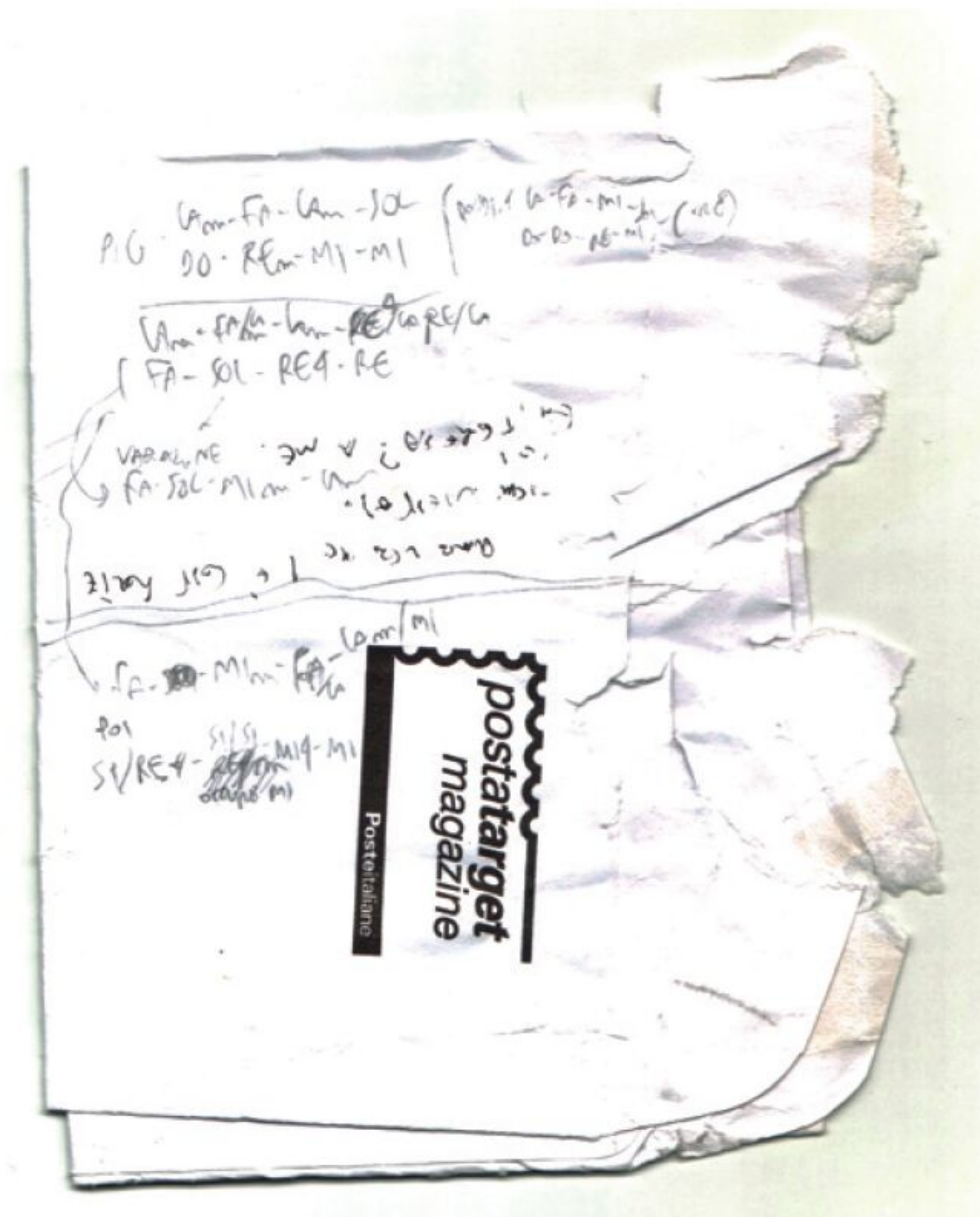


Peek behind the bacon curtains: Level drafting is a swine...

A couple of weeks later Alain came back with a large map that would end up being part of the first level of *A Pig Quest*. There was the big tree of woe, the chamber of Hoggot, the mosquito pond. He also had the main character animated in his unarmoured form, sketches for many enemies and, most importantly, a story. A great one!

And those graphics... I had never seen anything like that on a Commodore 64. Ever. [Us either! -Ed]

Needless to say, I thought it would be foolish of me to pass on being the one to implement his vision. Unfortunately, that also



Aldo and Gaetano composed the title tune while queuing at the Roast Office. Now P Off.

meant putting myself into the most complex game-coding experience of my life. By far. I'd encourage him to unleash his creativity and craft his pixels without limitation, and to every majestic, memory-eating



Antonio sipping a picture perfect pig-me-up between projects

screen he would throw at me I'd just reply, "keep them coming". And come they did, each presenting unique coding challenges, but also taking us one step closer to the goal of bringing the fantastic world of Frank Further to life.

A couple of months into the development, when we understood that the game was really happening, we reached out to musicians Aldo and Gaetano Chiummo. I had already done many

games with them and knew that they were among the most talented musicians to ever grace the chiptune scene. Technical excellence, though, is only half of their craft. What really makes them stand out from the rest is their unique talent in 'reading' a game. You could say, in fact, that the music really came along with the story, and they were instrumental in writing it *[hey I do the puns around here! -Ed]*.

Aldo and Gaetano were never happy with a brief description of the settings, they wanted to see (and at times even play) what they were composing for, because their ambition was creating a proper soundtrack to the game. Embracing the "ready when it's ready" approach and unleashing their creativity as never before, the track

counter stopped at a whopping 36 tunes. Like with the graphics, I couldn't believe my ears when the first tunes started



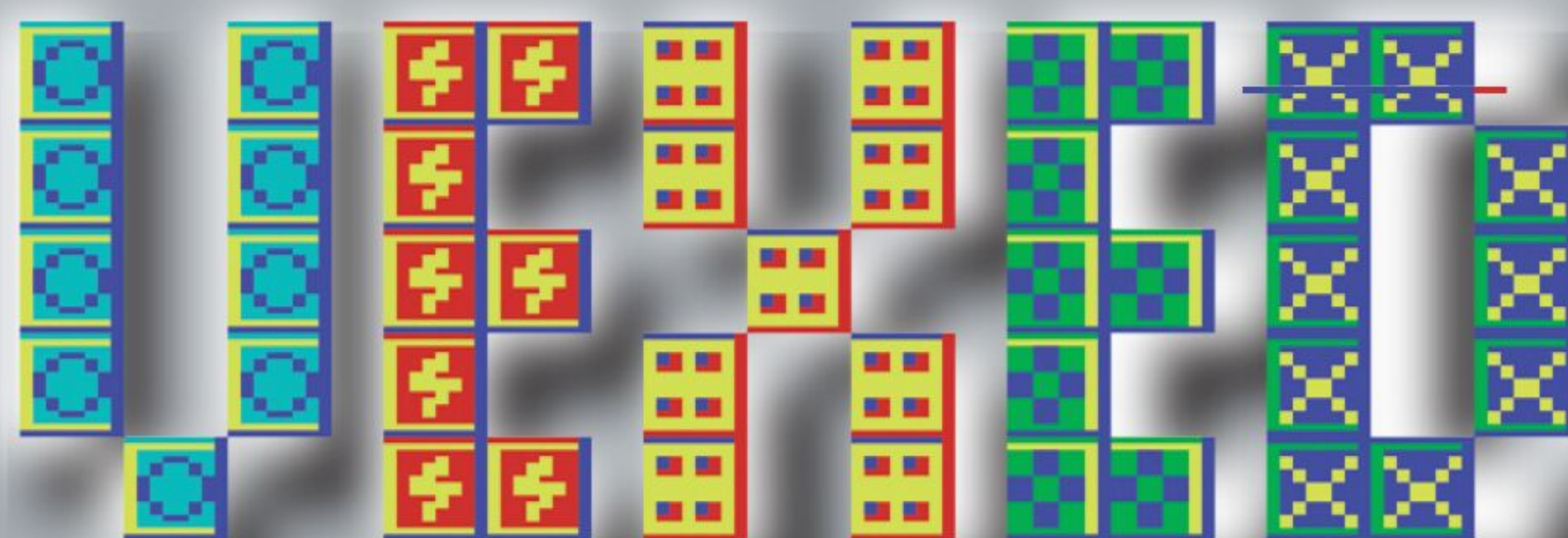
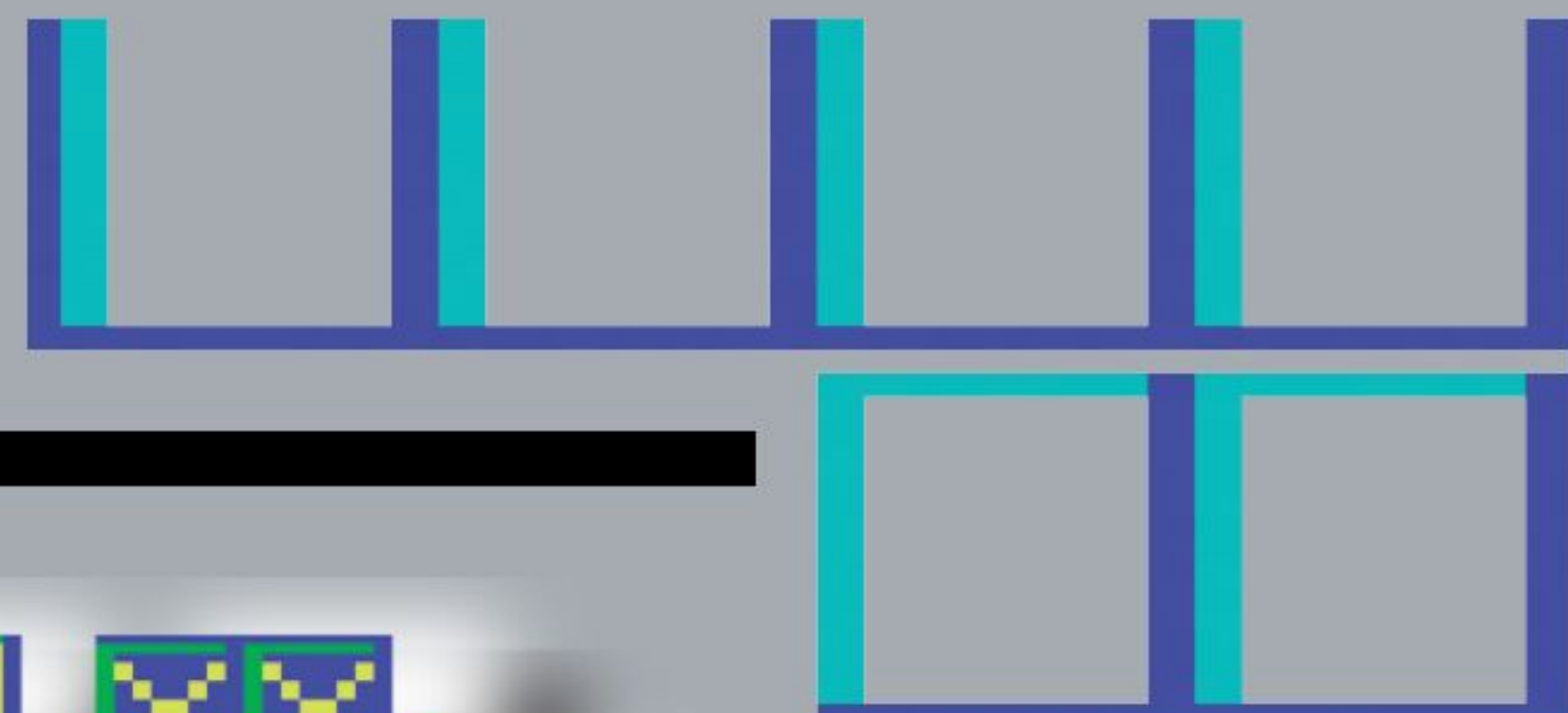
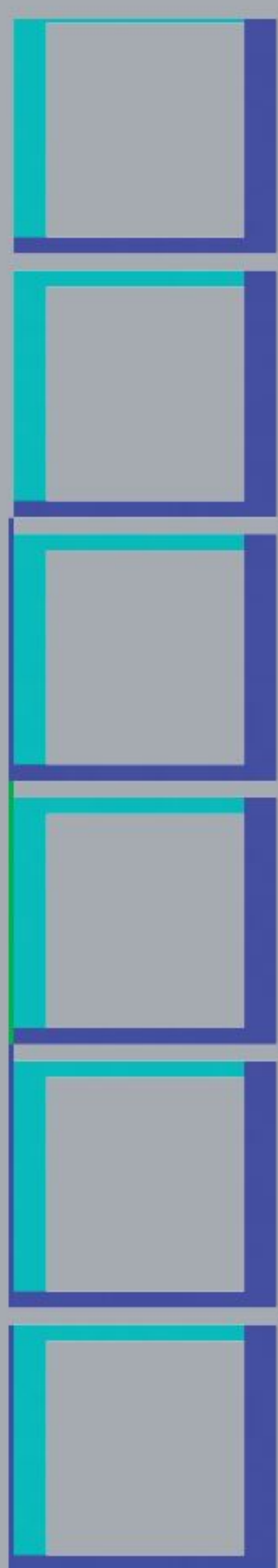
to come in. Once I had the first few rooms playable with graphics and music in place, I had the confirmation that we were onto something really special, or dare I say unique, on a C64. Then I started to feel the pressure because I knew I had to try my best to make justice to that audio-visual godsend, but at the same time knew I was the only one who could blow up the whole thing a la *Planet of the Apes*.

Next time – we'll take a look at a few of the technical hoggly hurdles, and how Antonio sowed them...



...but pays off as it trots on

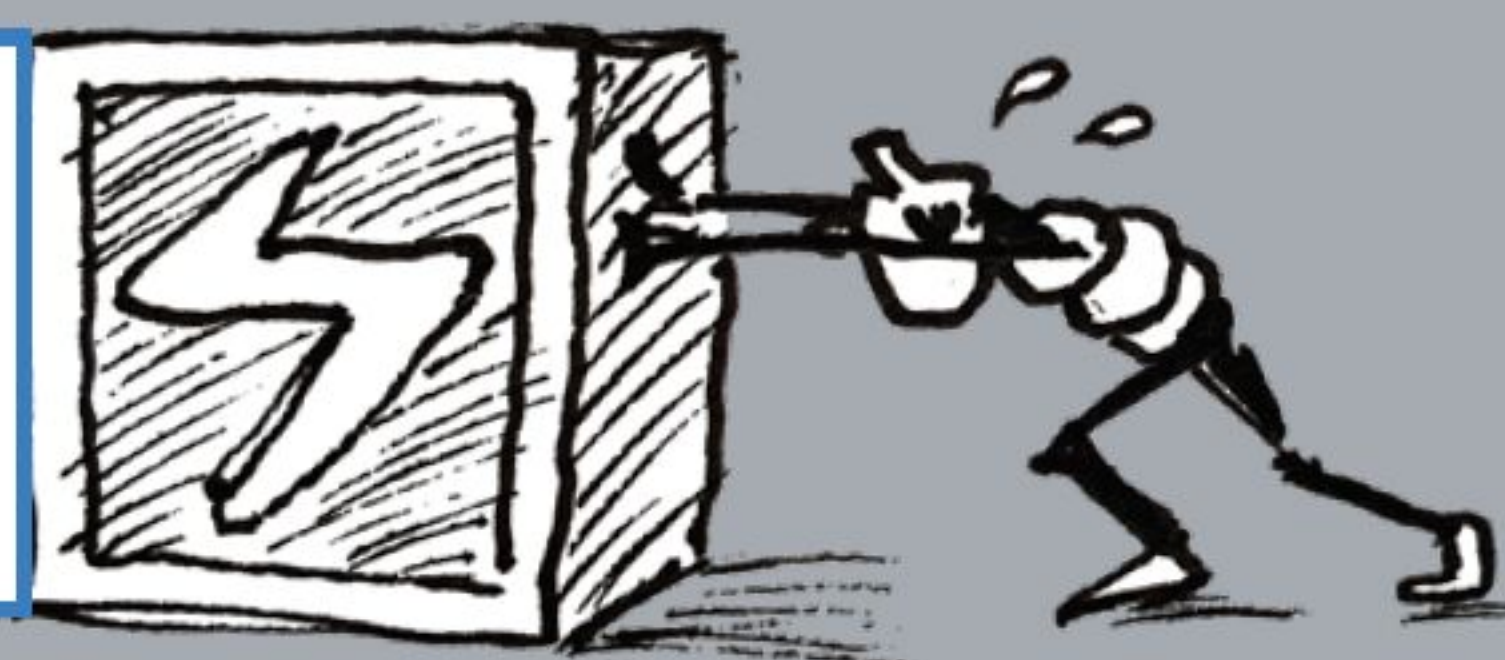




Price: \$ name your own price | digital

Developer: Under4MHz (2023)

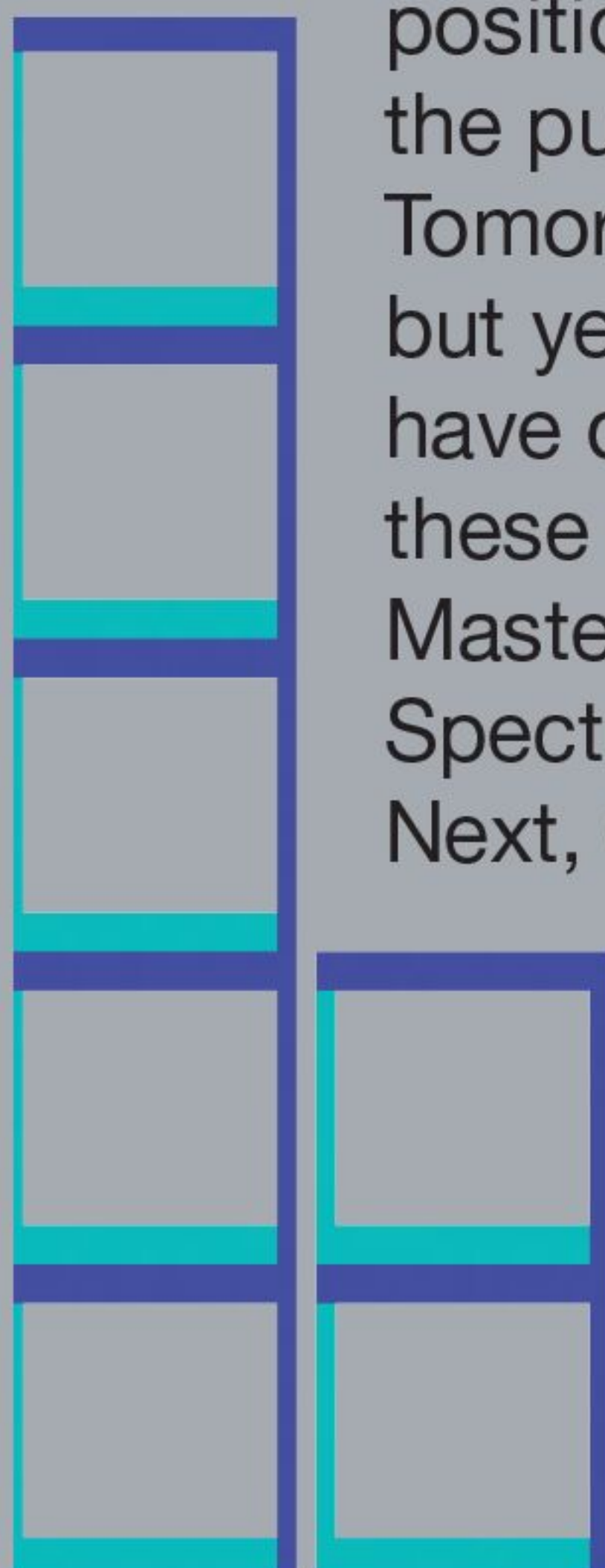
Link: on.mom/oZiu



Ob la di, ob la da, life goes on... and that means more sliding blocks to match. In each of the 59 levels (named after The Beatles' songs) in a game that supports multiple computers and consoles, the player must shift blocks one at a time left or right – with gravity taking over, and chain reactions happening when blocks match and disappear. The twist is that in some situations you must match an odd number of blocks to ensure all of a particular pattern are removed. Get into an unsolvable position and you can reset the puzzle to try again. Tomorrow never knows, but yesterday you could have downloaded it for all these systems – Game Boy, Master System, Game Gear, Spectrum 48/128, Spectrum Next, ColecoVision, MSX, Sega SG-1000, SpectraVision SV-318/328, Memotech MTX 500/512, Sord M5, Cougar Boy/ MegaDuck, MicroBee and Amstrad CPC!



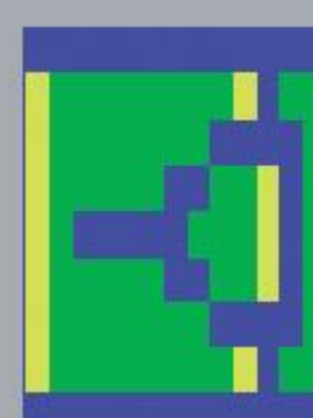
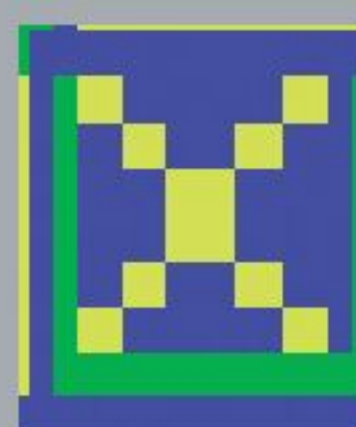
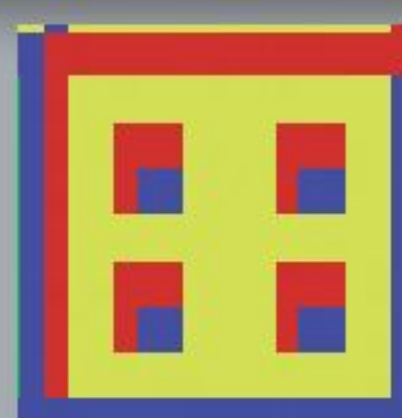
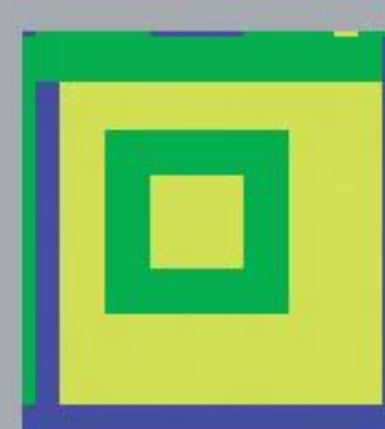
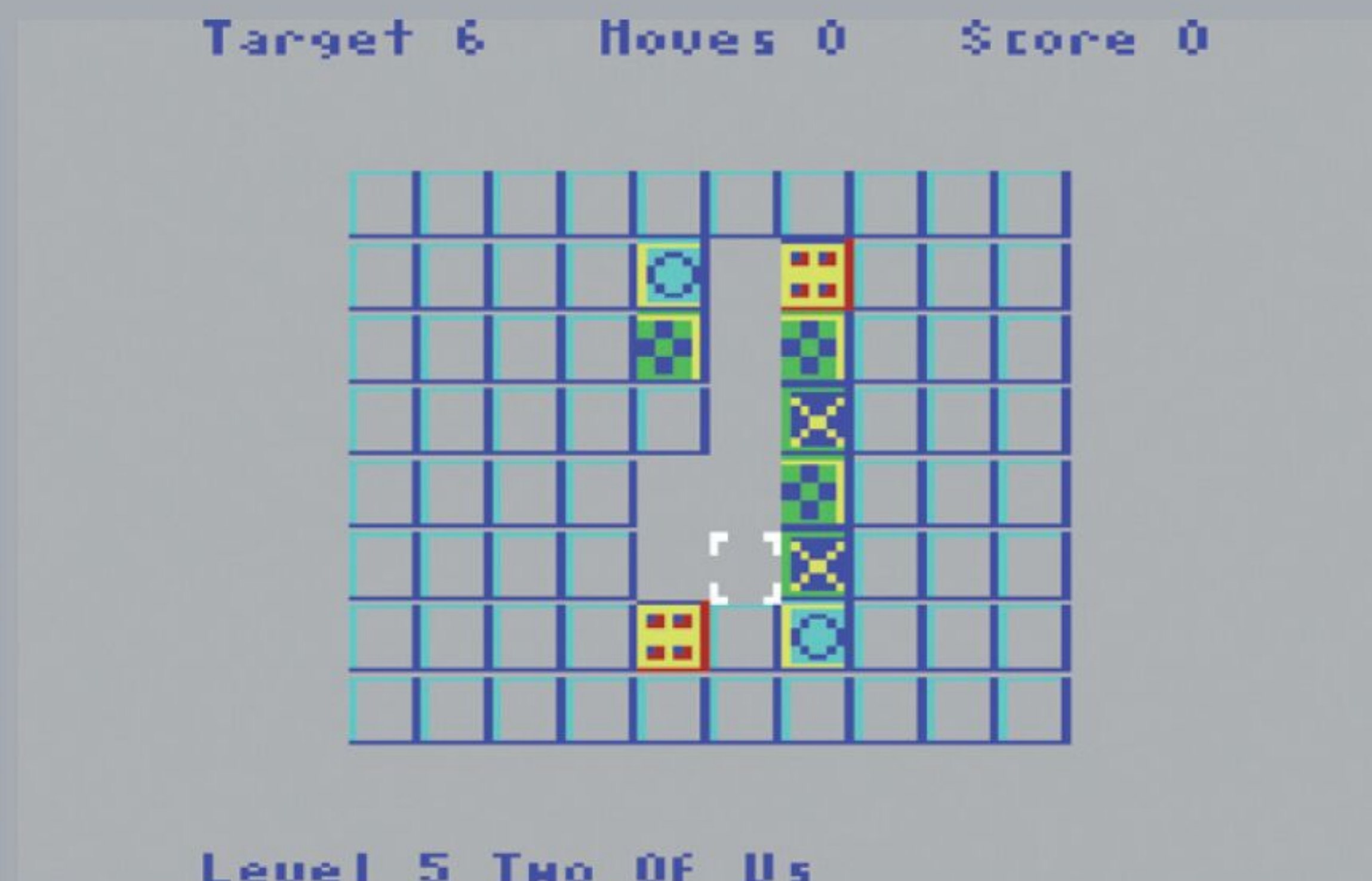
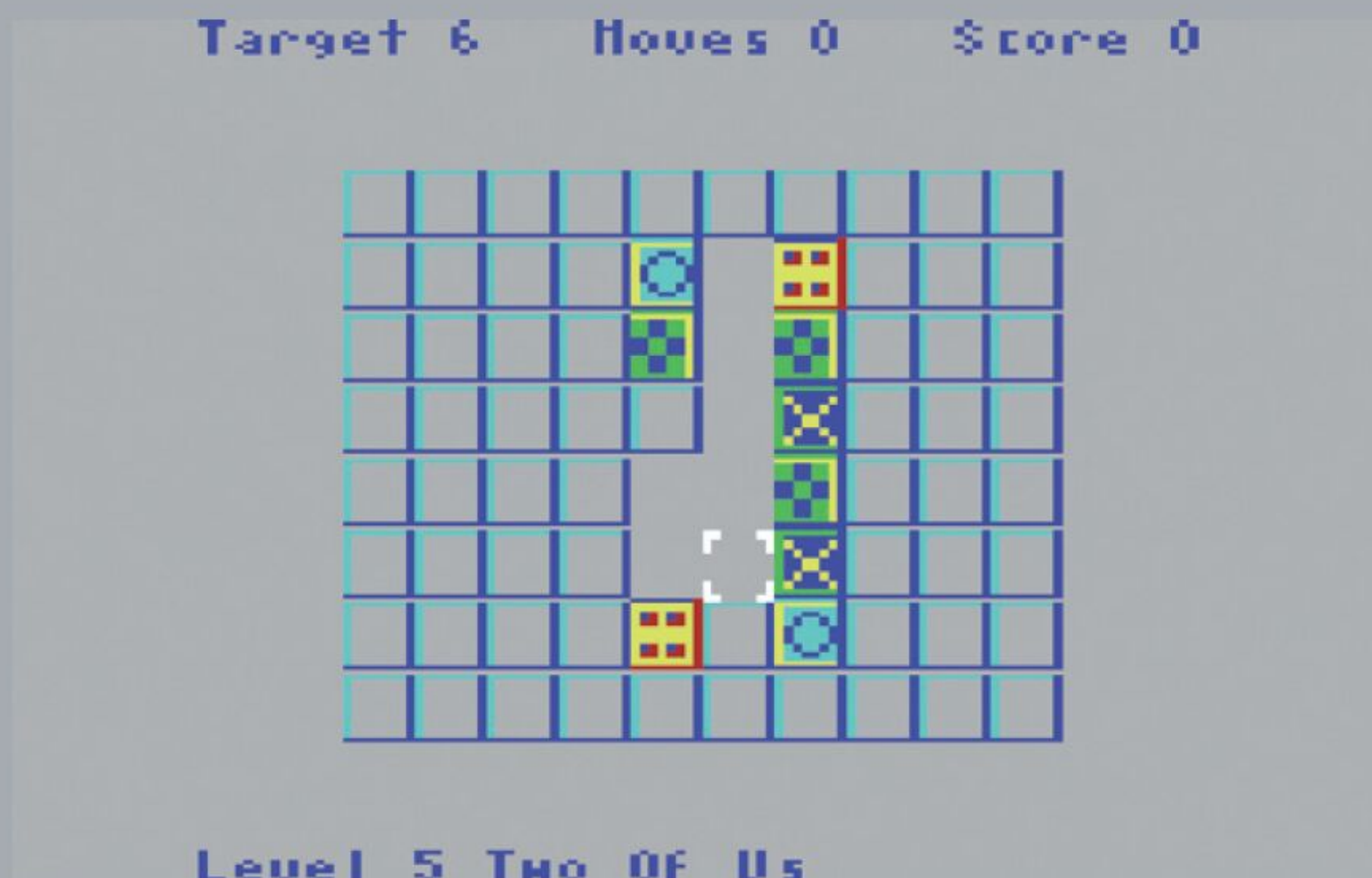
In the realm of classic puzzle games that our Paul Morrison loves so much (!) *Vexed* offers a really fresh spin on the familiar falling block challenge. It's basically *Tetris* in four directions; a dance-off for blocks if you like. That may seem straightforward or even leftforward at first, but don't be fooled. The freedom to manoeuvre blocks in any direction adds a level of complexity as well as delight. The game tech itself thrives on simplicity; no flashy graphics, SIDacious music, or overwhelming power-ups distract you from the core gameplay. And "cor" it is. But what truly sets it apart is its addictive nature. You'll lose track of time, saying, "Just one more game." If you're a puzzle fan seeking a new twist on an old favourite, give it a shot and prepare to be pleasantly vexed. If you're Paul, well, you're a block-head either way. (Just kidding PM, luv ya really!) But I love *Vexed* just a bit more.



Under4MHz



TEST



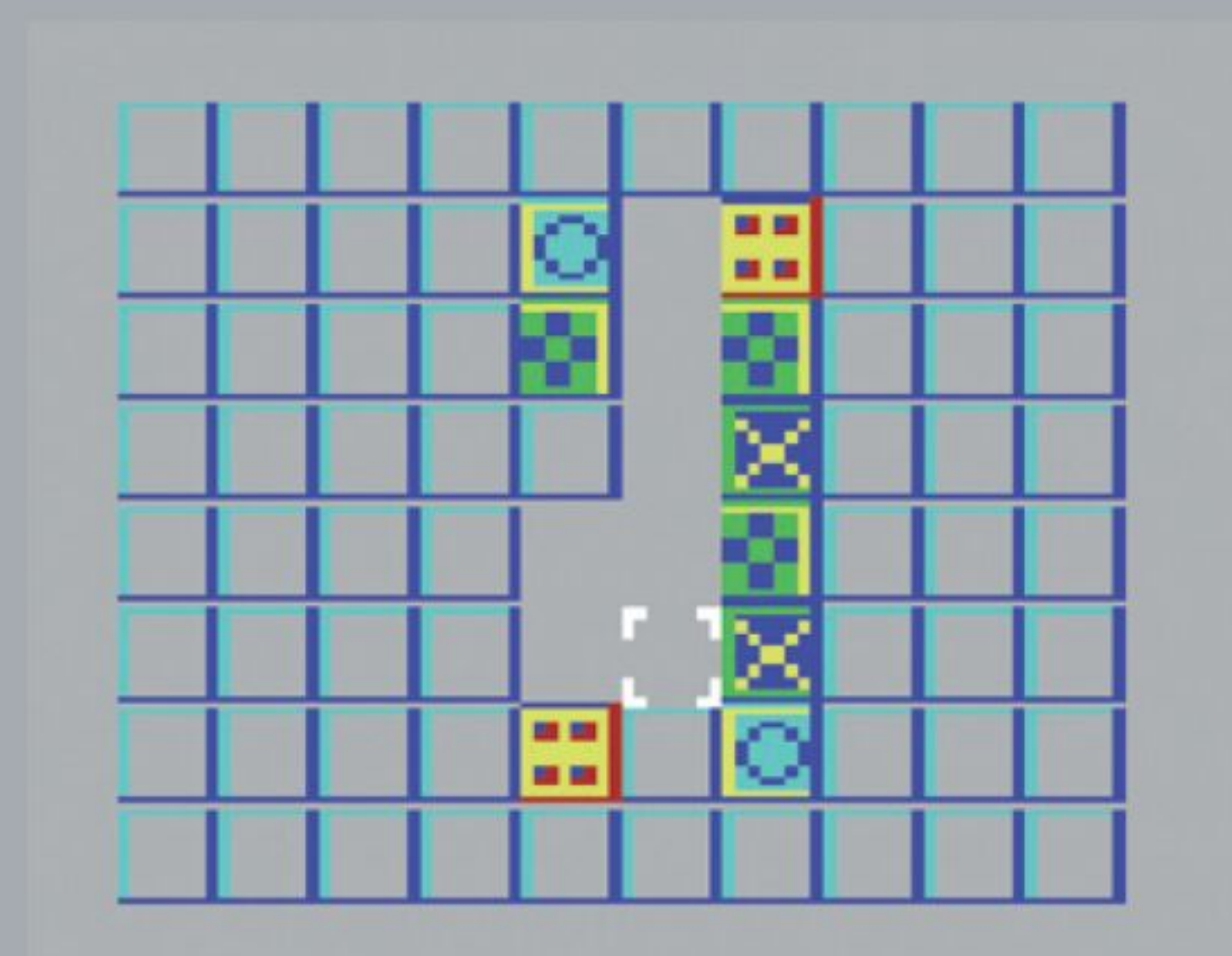
One thing is for sure, it does exactly what it says on

the tin, for in the words of Yoda, "you will be, you will be!" It's *Puzznic* not *Puzznic*, or even *Pieces II*, but the ingenuity of the level design has to be applauded, along with the "target" move count that gives you a rough idea just how complex each puzzle may be. Or not. Some of the trickiest challenges had single digit targets. Other plus points are that quitting and restarting is really speedy, and that all 59 levels are available from the off; no lack of progression frustration here. It lacks the polish of Protovision's release but makes up for it with its substance and challenge.



First, we must give credit to Under 4MHz for the sheer

number of formats this game has appeared on. Second, we have the recent *Pieces II* to compare *Vexed* with. Where the Protovision game has more levels, this effort in the *Puzznic* style has the edge on presentation. I like the idea of having distinctive level names based on Beatles songs, with all 59 levels being accessible straight away. The pieces themselves are OK but not outstanding (that Taito sheen is missing). Stretch your brain, match some shapes, and while away a few hours being vexed by this puzzler.



PRESENTATION: 72%

Clear look onscreen, with all the levels available from the title screen.

GRAPHICS: 68%

Simple but clear shapes.

SOUND: 55%

Simple sound effects and no music. Did we mention simple?

HOOKABILITY: 79%

Here's where it shines, although the difficulty starts to rise after a few levels.

LASTABILITY: 78%

Plenty of perplexing puzzles for you to peruse perhaps.

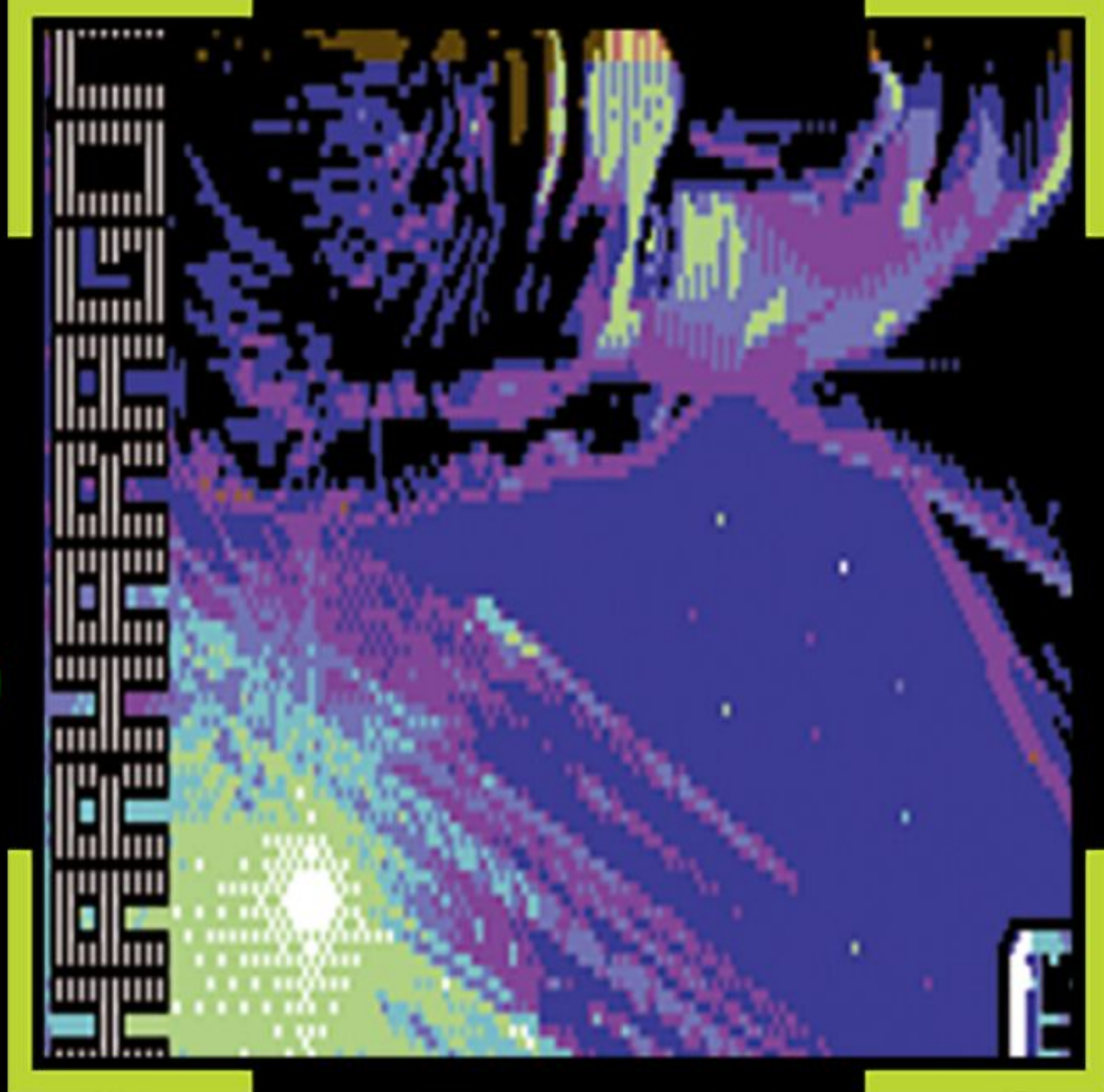
OVERALL 77%

Enjoyable exasperation from a programming polymath.

ZZAP! 64 RADAR - 12 MONTHS OUT!

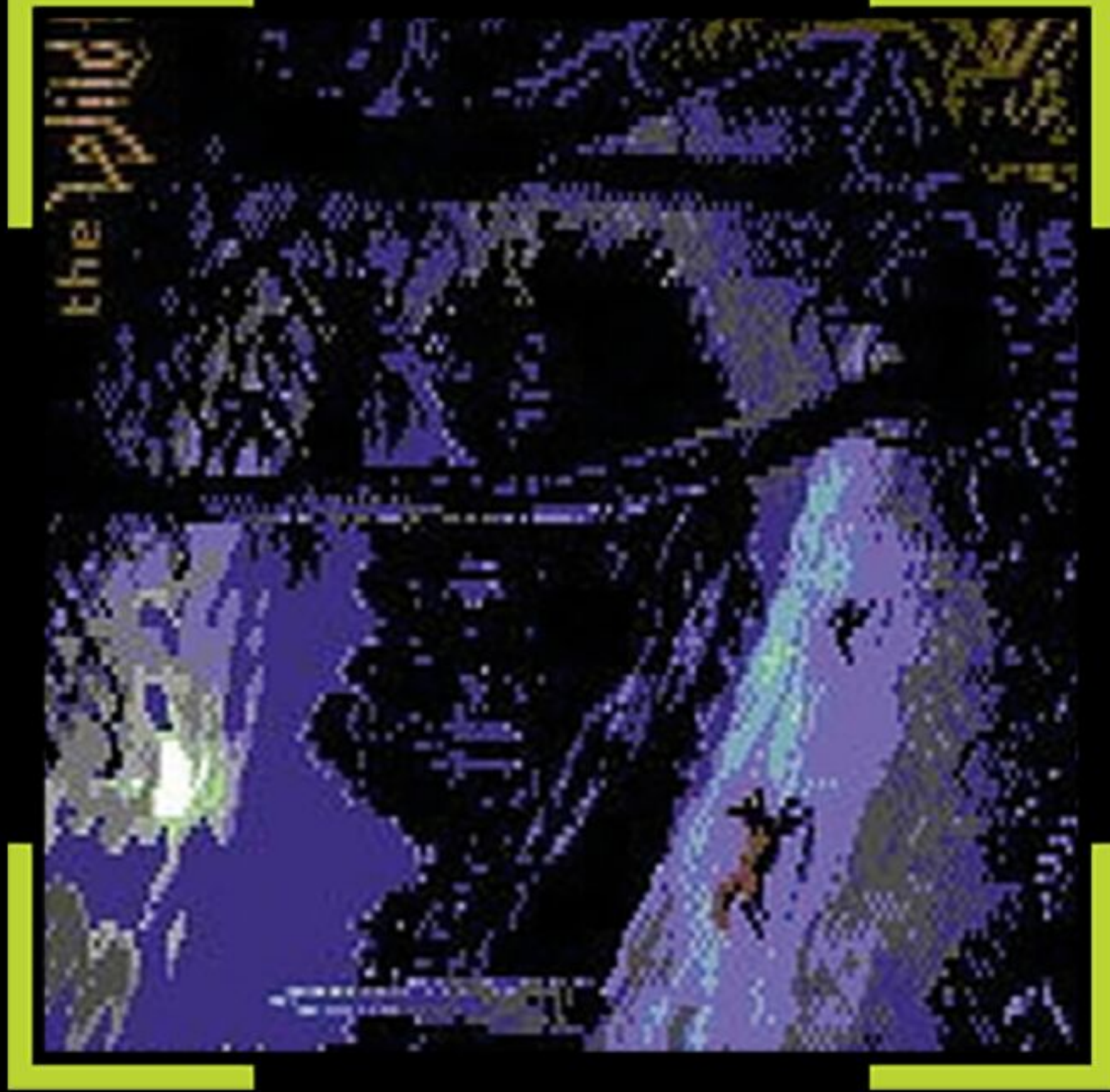
Release dates subject to change (estimations sourced from the developers where possible!)

Harharagon



Trapped within the confines of *Harharagon*, renowned as the galaxy's most impregnable prison, your objective is to make a daring escape.

The Wild Wood



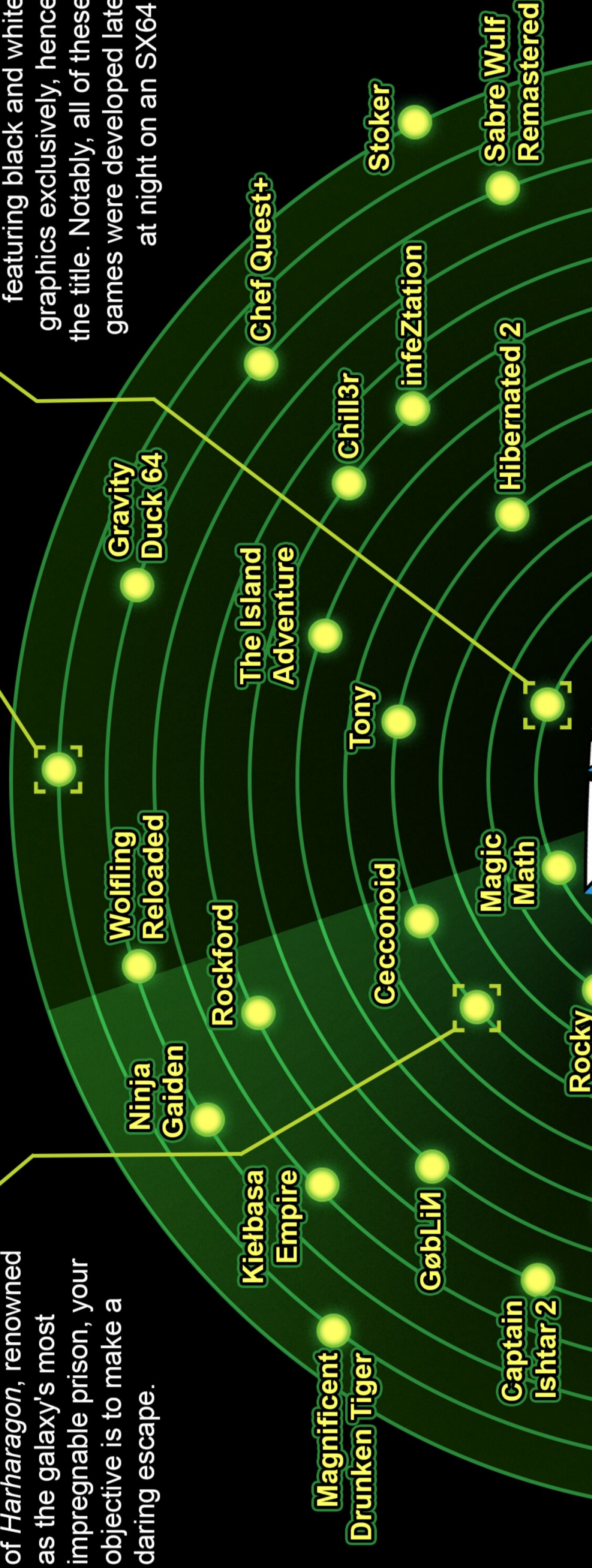
Take on the role of Hare as he journeys in search of his ancestral home. Do you have what it takes to enter the *Wild Wood* and live to tell the tale?

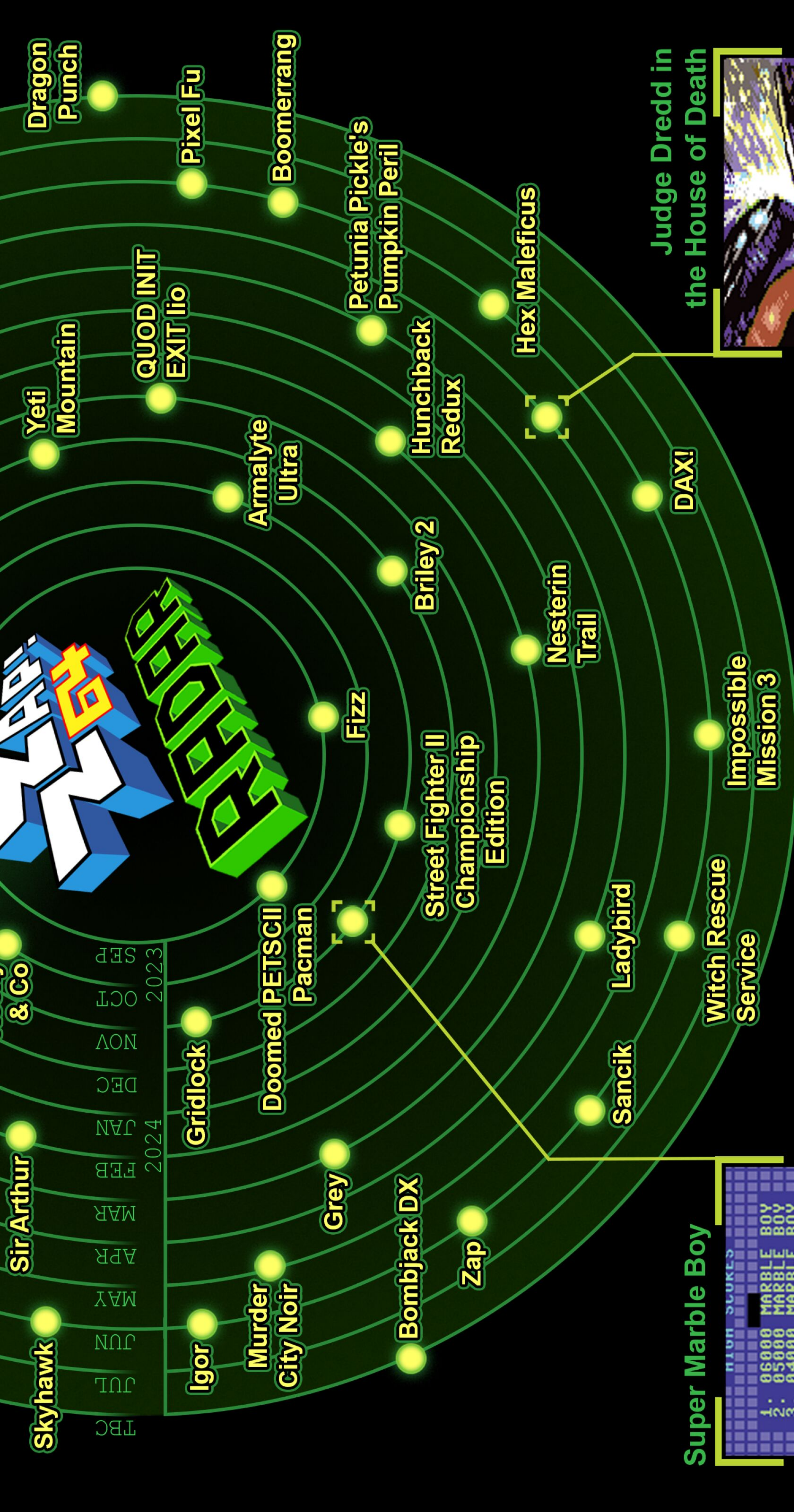
Monochrome Tales



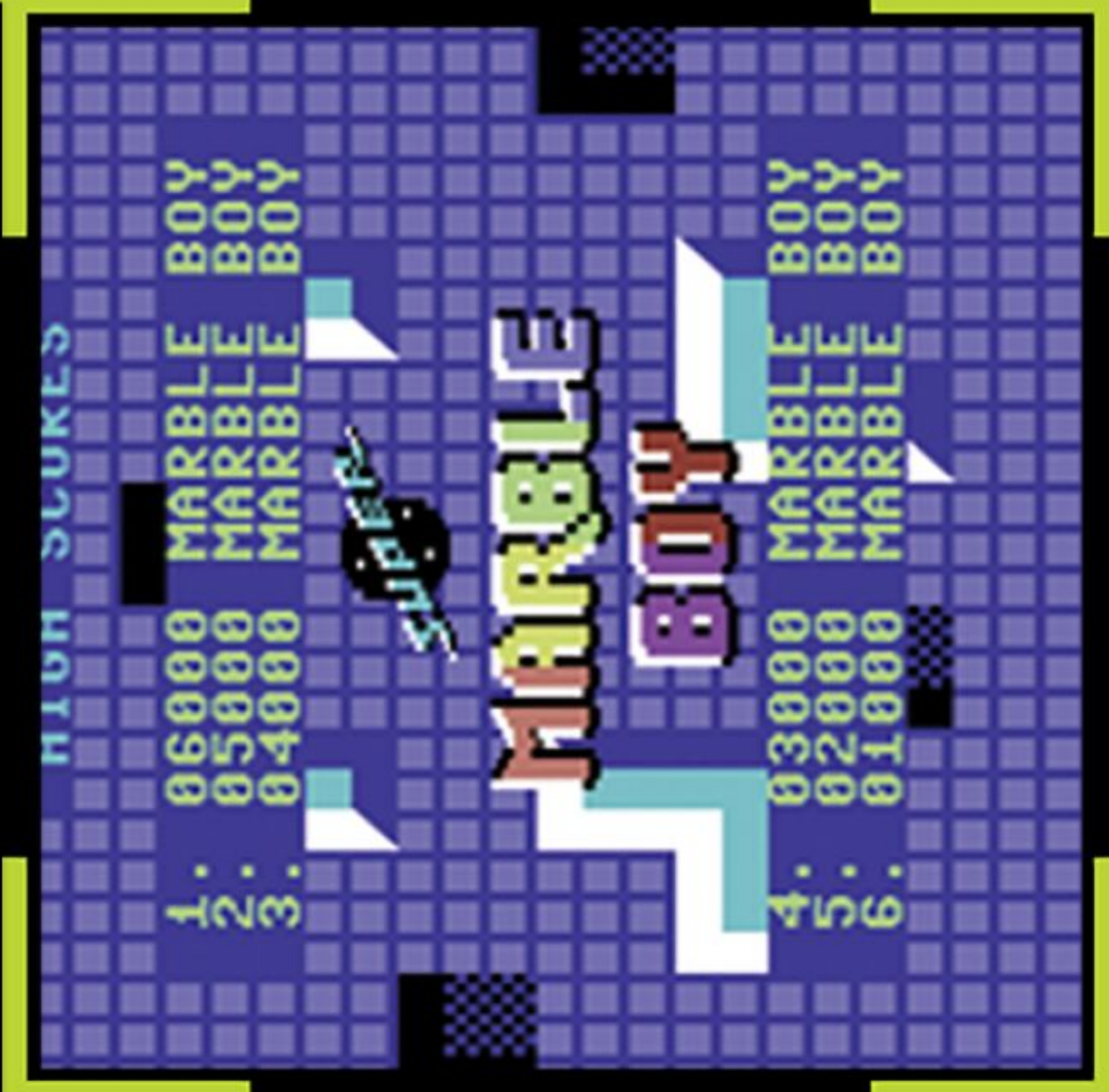
n the schoolyard. I see a got ang out here. I can go sou ow?

A trio of graphic adventures, featuring black and white graphics exclusively, hence the title. Notably, all of these games were developed late at night on an SX64.





Super Marble Boy



Gather 45 banners within a specified time frame and in a prescribed sequence. Beware of pitfalls, hone your maneuvering abilities, and master shortcuts to conserve precious seconds. Are your reflexes sharp enough to reach the finish line swiftly?

Judge Dredd in the House of Death



Derived from the 1986 pen and paper dice rolling game, which was published by 2000AD, this adventure invites you to delve into a mansion teeming with malevolent cultists who have successfully summoned the Dark Judges into our realm.

TECHNICAL BIT IN THE MIDDLE

Newsflash! The new J-CIAs are now hot off the soldering iron, which means we finally have replacement options available to purchase for *every* major Commodore 64 chip – wahoo! All in case your old chips become, well, fries.

CIA = J-CIA

RETRO8BITSHOP.COM

Long rumoured and finally available thanks to demand kicked up by our very own Ed on his little YouTube channel *Retro Recipes*, Jani Laatikainen’s replacement CIAs are so good you’ll need them twice (because the C64 has two – but you’ll also get a 10% discount on two at the time of writing). Jani is even working on a slightly modified variant that will support something called the Amiga, whatever that is.

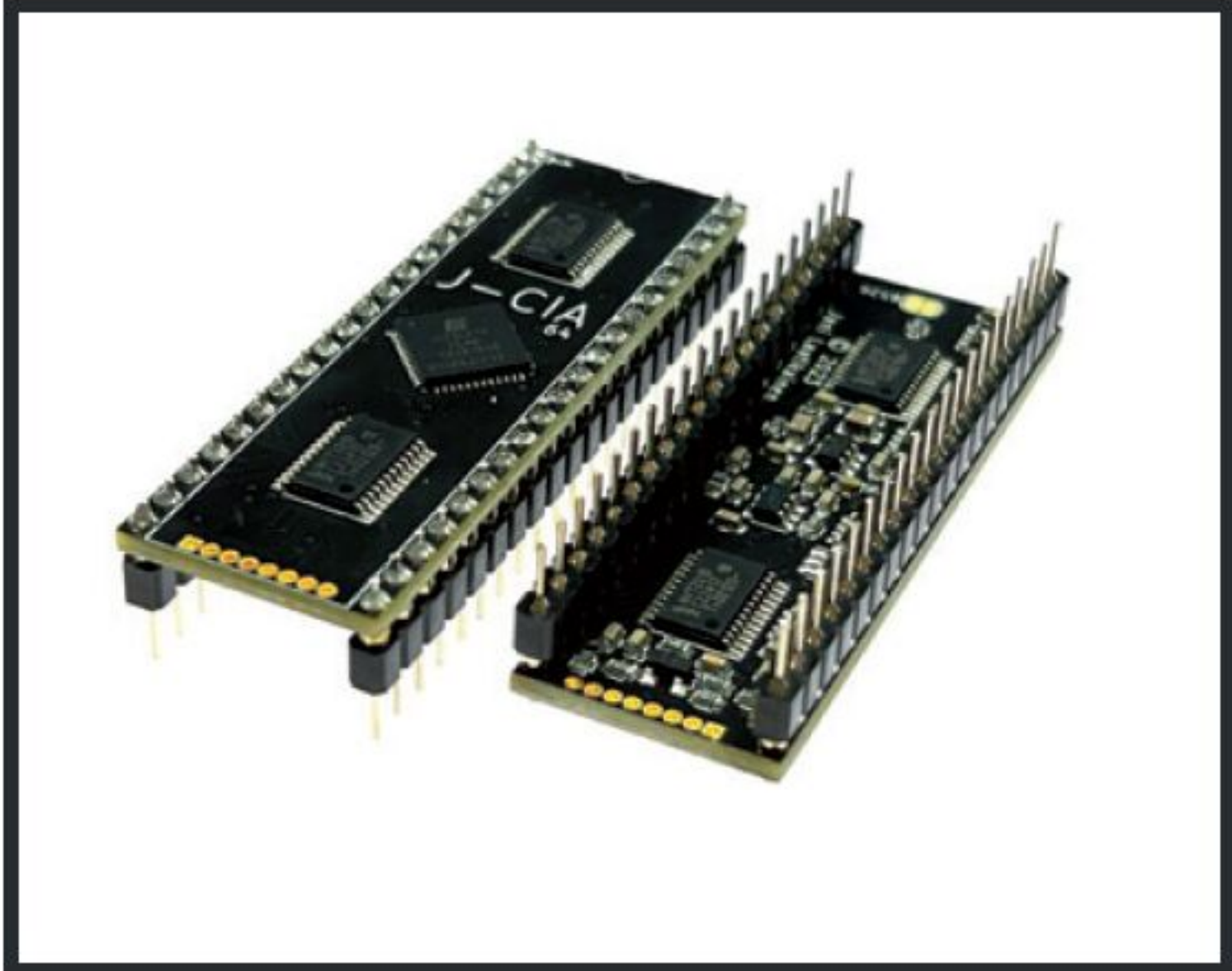
- + Contrary to naysayers it’s reportedly 100% compatible with all C64 models and all C64 software & tests; even complex demo scene stuff, about the same size as original CIAs despite FPGA, supports peripherals and carts, tested with 1581 drives too.
- No known downsides though future incompatibility discoveries can’t be ruled out, may be on backorder depending when you purchase.

PLA = PLANKTON

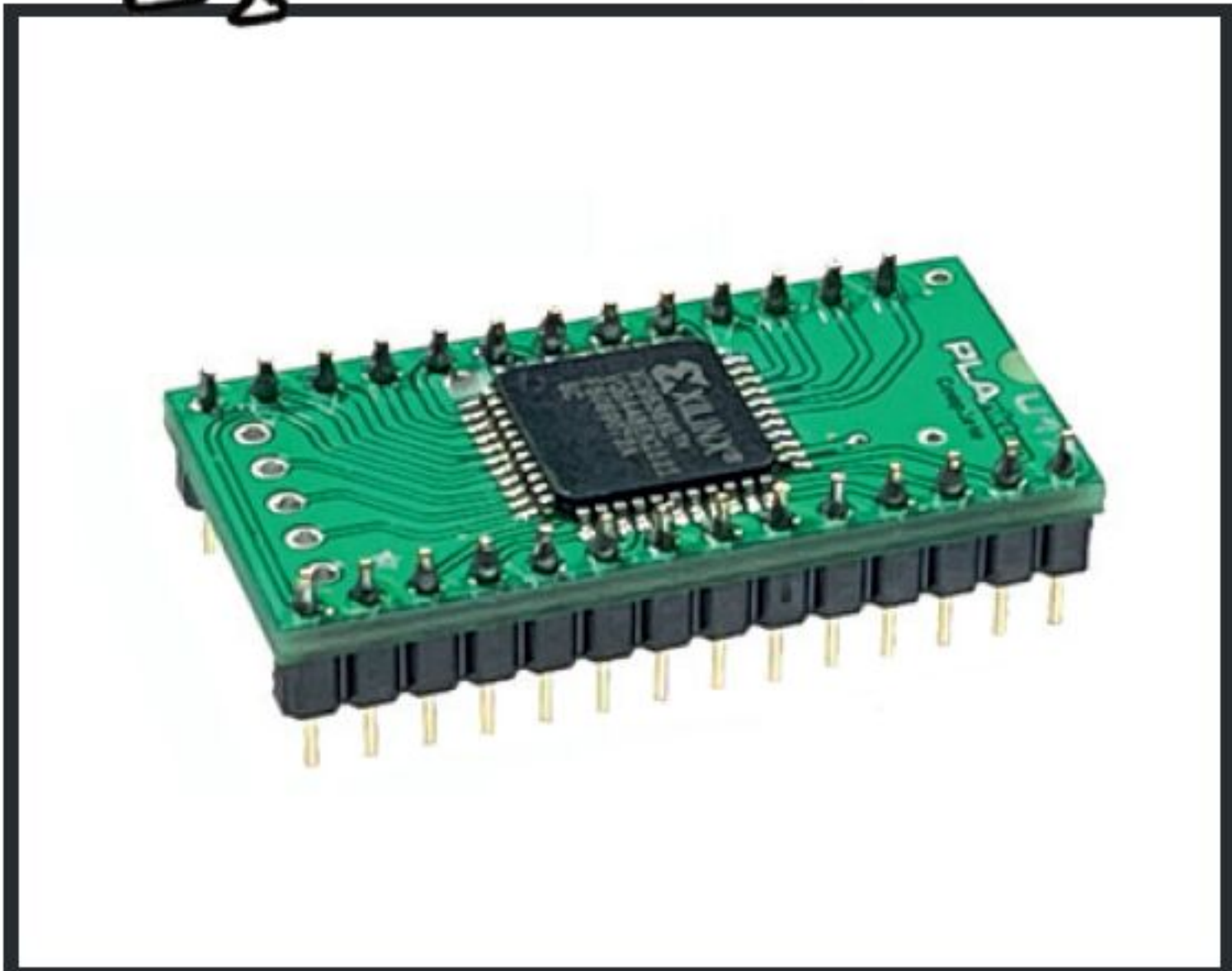
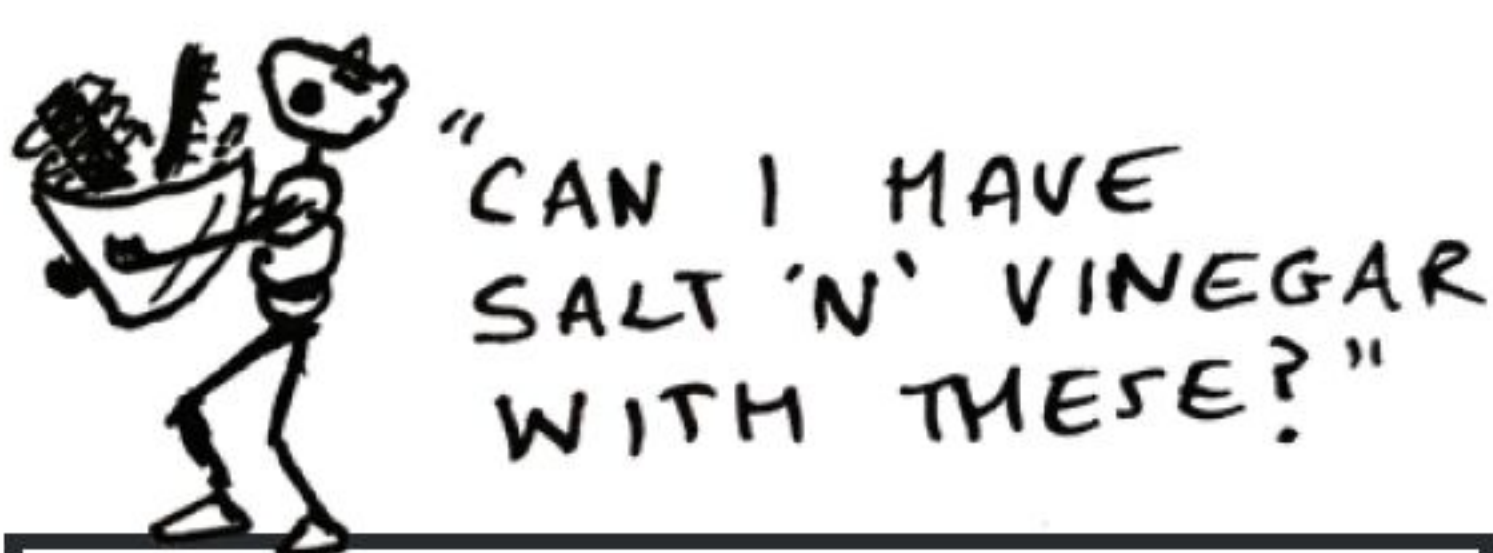
RETRO8BITSHOP.COM

Ah PLAnkton, the gnats of the sea, and so it is with the Programmable Logic Array; responsible for memory mapping and chip selection as data “flies” around the C64 [buzz off – Ed]. Faulty PLAs are a common cause of black screen failure. This replacement by Eslapion is 100% compatible with all longboard models of C64 motherboard commonly found in the “breadbin” variant.

- + Low heat, low power, gold plated pins, should last another 40 years.
- Incompatible with newer 250469 shortboards which used a completely different (albeit more reliable) type of PLA chip.



Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	No
Compatibility:	Very High
Cost:	Low



Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	No
Compatibility:	High
Cost:	Low

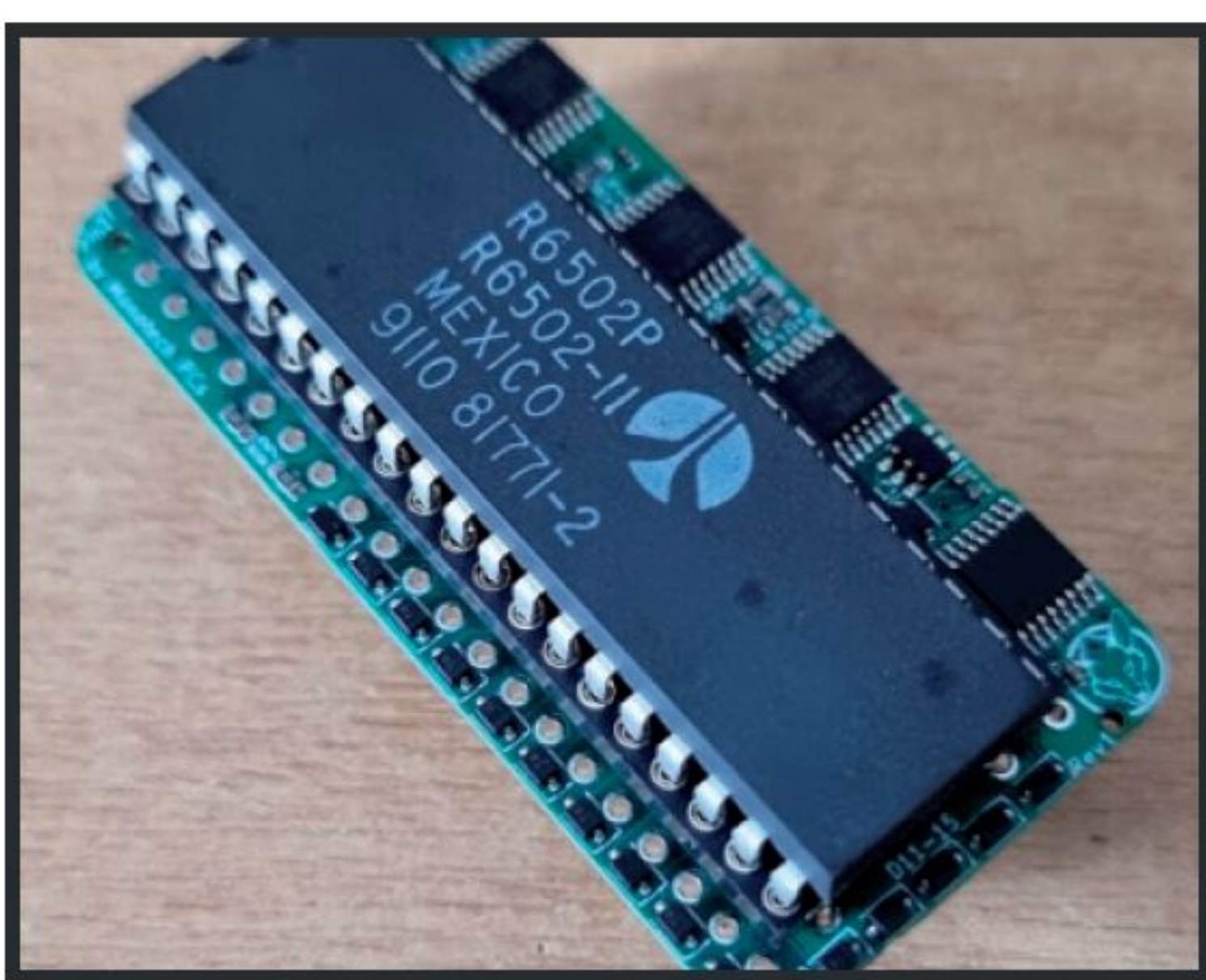
By Professor Brian Strain

6510 CPU = 6502 + ADAPTER

MONOTECH.FWSCART.COM

6502 chips are still readily available as “new old stock” but the problem is the C64 needs the rarer 6510 due to its different logic. Thankfully Monotech have released this handy dandy adaptery which adds the required extra logic to the 6502. How logical. (Or hold off for the J-CPU FPGA replacement from Jani Laatikainen if you prefer.)

- + Very clever solution to make use of existing stock, available in various options including DIY kit or pre-populated with a tested 6502, also supports Plus/4 and C16 (may require soldering to board to make them fit in the height of those cases though).
- Some minor incompatibilities are being ironed out such as with the c0pperdragon video modulator (another clever replacement device).



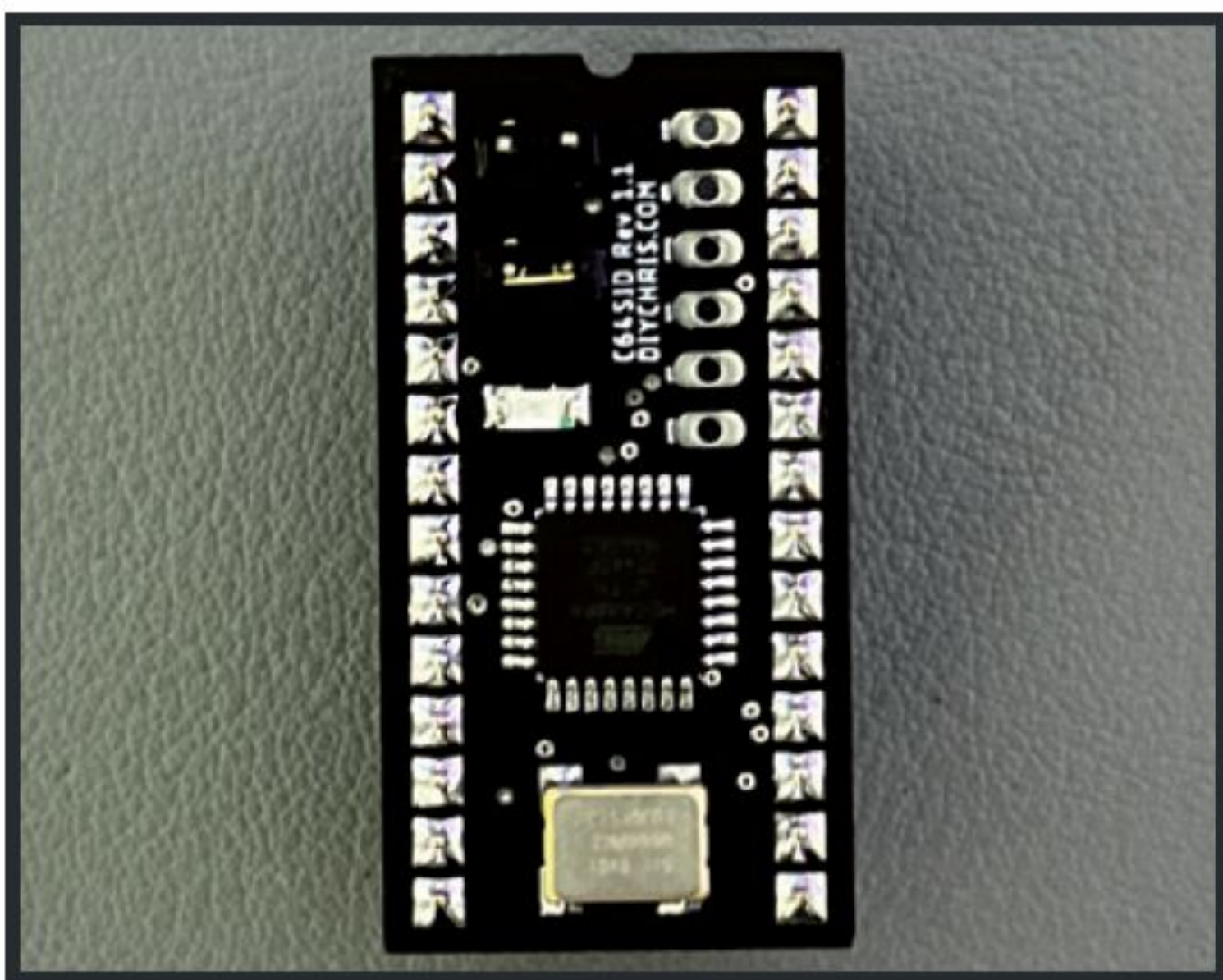
Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	Yes
Compatibility:	Very High
Cost:	High

SID = FPGASID

WEBSTORE.KRYOFLUX.COM

Ah the glorious SID chip, the Katy Perifractic of the 80s. Or something. But just like the 80s, it can never be fully reproduced, on account of its partly analogue make-up; something an FPGA can’t do. Yes, the original SID was *aliiive* I tell you! However, this replacement from KryoFlux comes pretty darn close to those twinkles, and we bet casual listeners won’t be able to spot the difference in an oral line-up. Wait let me rephrase th– *[too late, out of space –Ed]*

- + Accurate replication of the original two chip versions, and includes two of any for 6-voice stereo sound.
- Nothing “beats” the original, if too pricey consider the ArmSID over SwinSID – though SwinSID Ultimate comes close.



Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	Yes
Compatibility:	Very High
Cost:	High

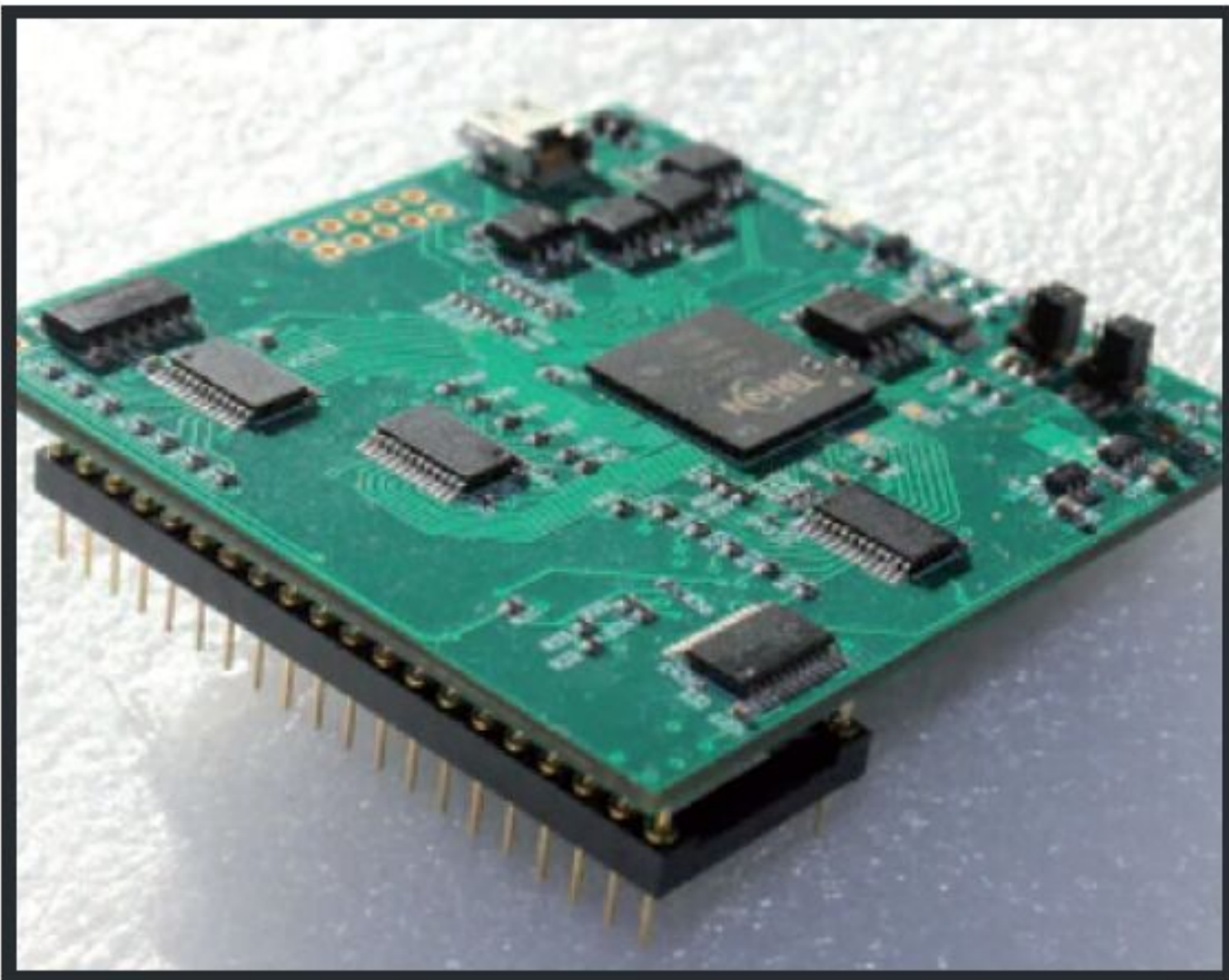
TECHNICAL BIT IN THE MIDDLE

VIC-II = VIC-II KAWARI

ACCENTUAL.COM/VICII-KAWARI

Randi Rossi’s incredible Kawari is an HDMI replacement for the VIC-II chip itself, available in Small or Large options. Get the Large board and you also have a mini-HDMI output socket right there on your new VIC-II “chip”. We’ve been dreaming of this for years, and now it’s here too.

- + Amazing value, supports PAL & NTSC with software configurator D64 file, brings the C64 up to true HDMI quality, negates need for Lumafix jailbar mod, adds 80 column mode a la Commodore 128.
- There may be some software that won’t work 100% but firmware is regularly updated.



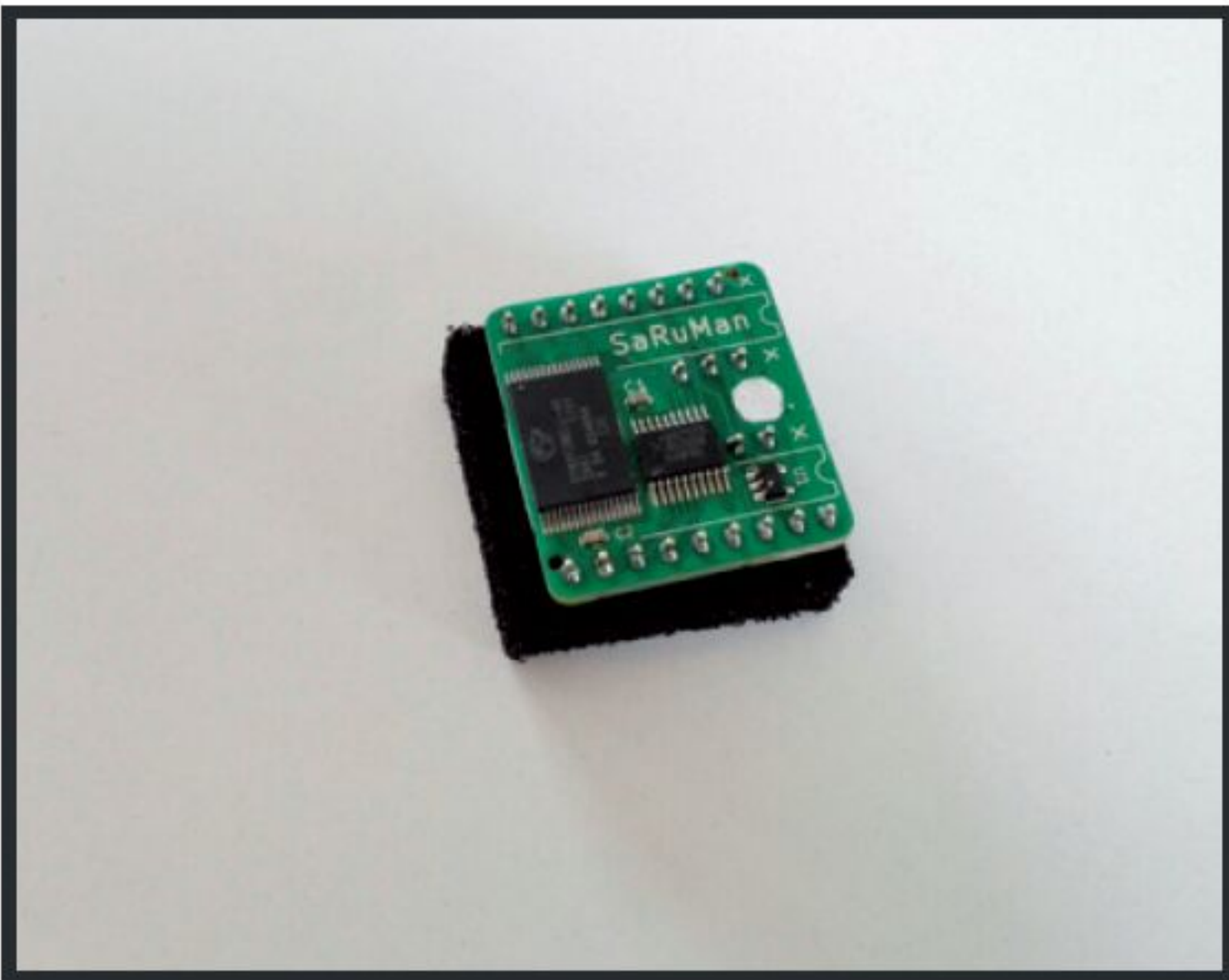
Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	No
Compatibility:	High
Cost:	Low

RAM = SARUMAN

RETROLEUM.CO.UK

Again from Eslapion this clever chappy from the clever chappy replaces the two DRAM chips on C64 and C64C boards 250466 and 250469, while consuming less power (5mA), and fixing a 30-year old crashing bug. It can also replace the eight chips on other motherboard variants with this motherboard mod: bit.ly/3LmAXVq

- + Really neat solution that reduces the number of chips on board, fixes a screen manipulation VSP bug that was finally explained in 2013.
- Installation in the most common C64s requires motherboard modification (but hey that could be a plus if you find that fun).



Can Buy It?	Yes
Can Build It?	No
Compatibility:	High
Cost:	Low

CLOSE 15 There you go, run along now and build your own 100% new Commodore 64 with all new chips. More on how to do that in a future issue in fact! We should add that there are other replacements available; the above are just the ones we’ve found most popular. Oh and by the way, we haven’t covered replacement kernals here because there are so many to choose from including cartridge options like EasyFlash 3, but diychris.com has a good selection – or just Google it on Yahoo! CIA U I8r.

MEGA65

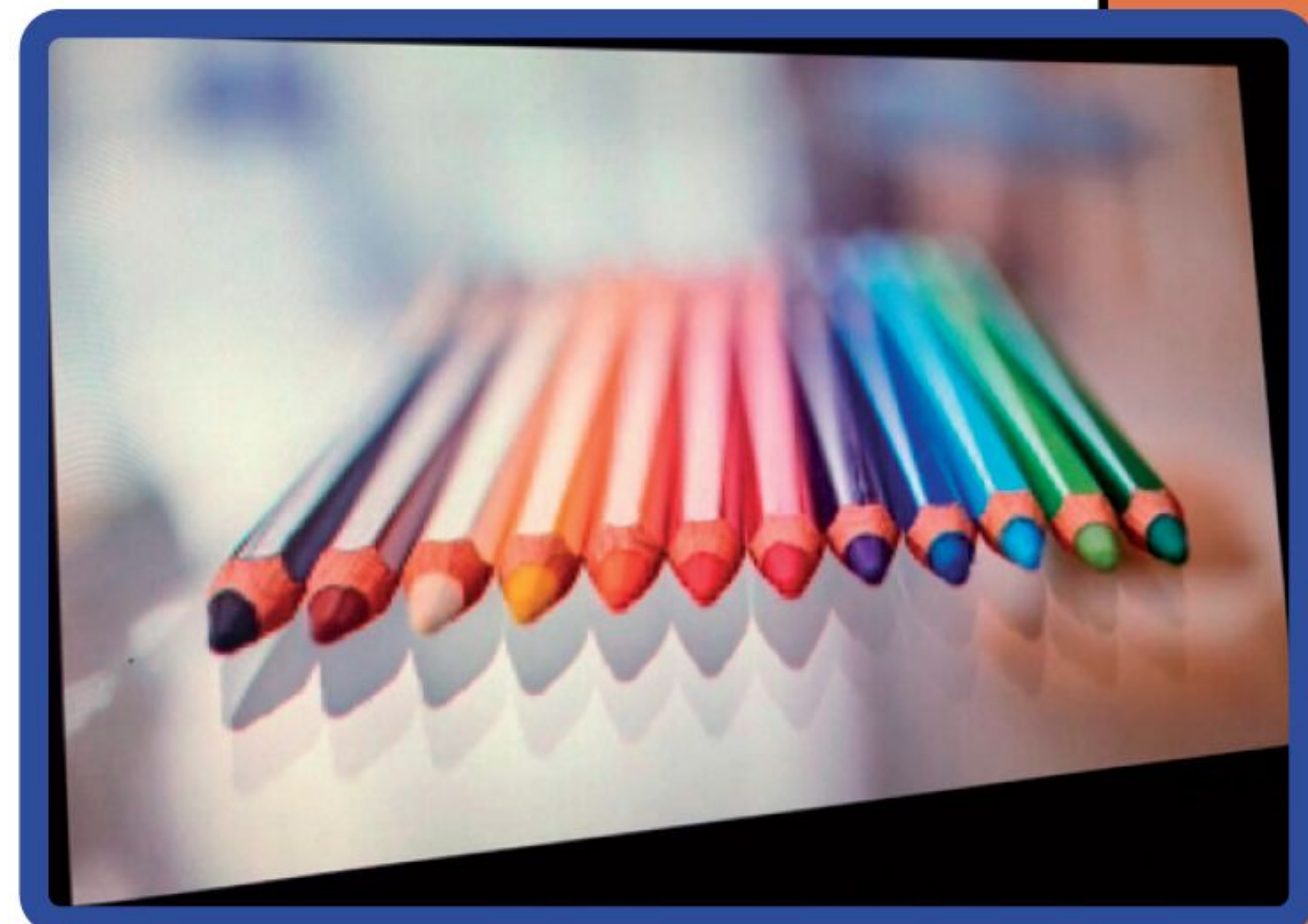
CORNER



MEGAJPEG by Mirage

From 256 to a staggering 8 million colours! This incredible software lets you load and display JPEG files directly from your SD card, showcasing them in 320x200 resolution. It's a mind-boggling demonstration of the MEGA65's immensely colourful capabilities.

Download: on.mom/iydl



Classy by Deathy

Engage in a Match-3 puzzle challenge where you'll seek out classic computer logos that, well, match! Keep an eye out for the versatile MEGA65 logo, which serves as a wild card capable of pairing with any other logo, thanks to its FPGA nature, theoretically transforming into any of the other computer logos. Geddit? A word of caution: this game possesses the potential to manipulate the space-time continuum and might just become your latest addiction.

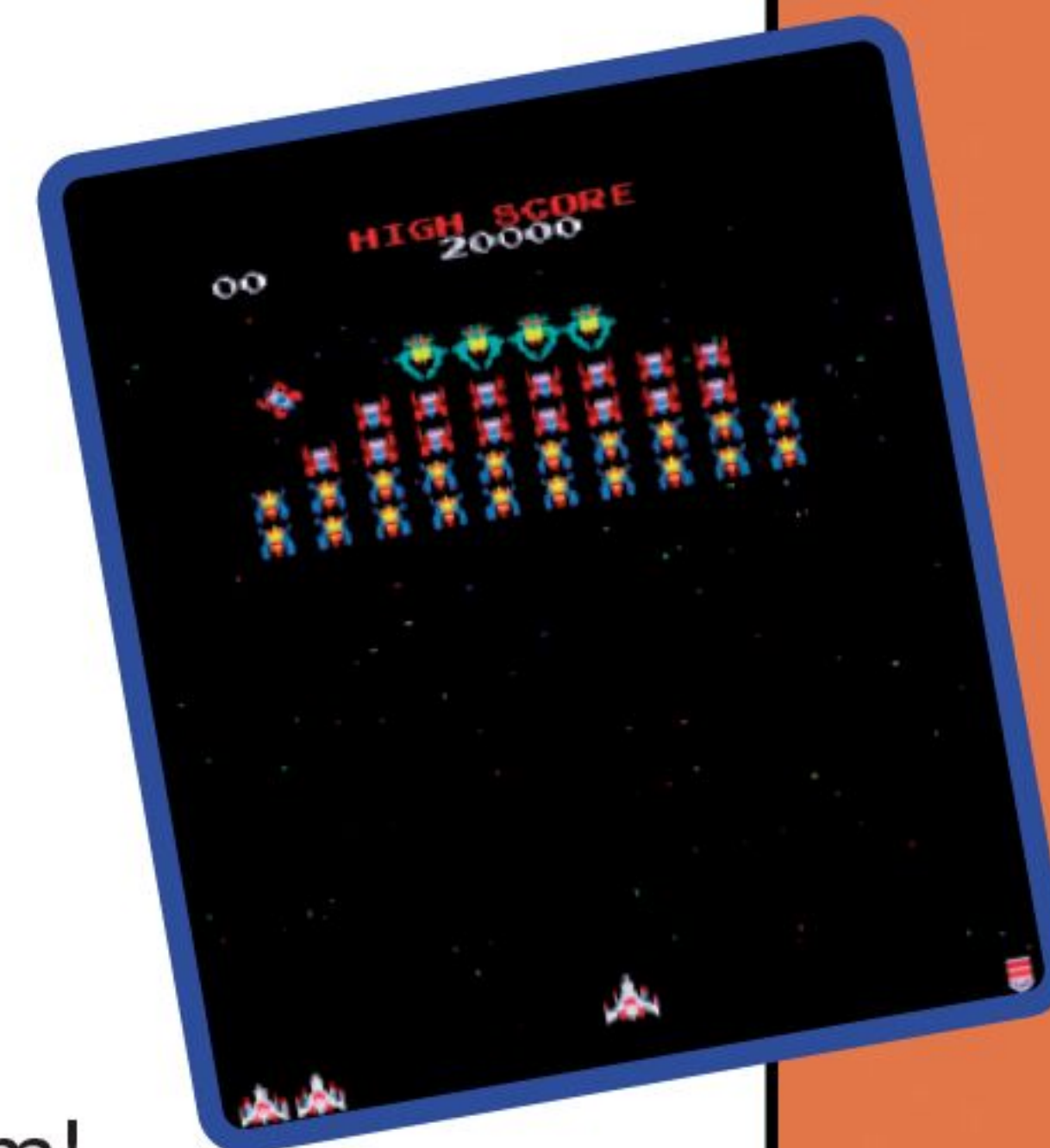
Download: on.mom/RKXj



Galaga by Muse

This goes beyond being a mere rendition of *Galaga* for the MEGA65; it's the authentic *Galaga* experience, a faithful adaptation of the original arcade hardware architecture, seamlessly operating on the MEGA65 FPGA. What's more, the core even enables you to connect a classic VGA monitor, oriented vertically, to perfectly recreate the arcade ambiance. Additionally, there's exciting news that Muse is in the process of adapting *Xevious* for the platform!

Download: mysl.nl/gApX



New mainboard (R5) revision!

Prepare for the arrival of the upcoming R5 mainboard revision, set to be included in the next shipment. This iteration boasts enhanced RAM support for MiSTer cores, bidirectional joystick ports, improved analogue audio quality, and a host of other exciting enhancements. Enhance!

Have you placed an order for the MEGA65 and are eagerly anticipating its arrival? Trenz aims to ship it in 2023, but cannot provide a precise delivery date at the moment. The MEGA development team has decided to move on from the rev 4 PCB and is now focused on the rev 5. The next batch of orders will feature this, so its development needs to be completed before a delivery timeline can be confirmed. For more info point your mouse (or any rodent) at: mega65.org



GAMES THAT WEREN'T BUT ARE NOW...

Those games that got lost in the trenches of time, now dug out and released to the fans of Commodore 64 gaming today! Feast your ears on the forgotten gem for this issue!

TROOPER

Rob Stevens, 1986

In the distant year 2000, evil tyrant Nimoid turns humans into robotic slaves to serve the Knaphill Empire. Rebel troopers rescued you as you underwent conversion – leaving you with a robot body but an independent mind. Caught behind enemy lines, you must make your way through four defence sectors to reach the rebel lines.

Running towards the defence tower at the end of each sector, you are constantly assailed by robots. Stopping to shoot is dangerous, as you are constantly pursued by a large cruiser sent to destroy you. Reaching the tower, you must align the locks of the defence system. The more locks you get right, the more time to escape through the next sector. Run too slow and the cruiser will disintegrate you. Sad.

A young Rob Stevens developed the game back in 1986, but it was never published. Years later he found a tape complete with inlay and illustrations, and the recovered game was given away in Vinny Mainolfi's FREEZE64 fanzine as a Christmas 2020 bonus to subscribers.



There is plenty here that looks encouraging. The graphics themselves could be a little more polished, but are effective.

Sounds are very basic, but that was something that could be upgraded later. The main concern is the repetition in the gameplay. Constantly running right and dodging/shooting waves of enemies was only broken up by the tricky lock puzzles. It ends up feeling relentless and overwhelming rather than grabbing the player's attention. The large ship that kills you as it emerges from the left also pops into view rather than scrolling smoothly (a problem caused by using the built-in sprite expansion). Put some Iron Maiden on, kill some aliens, and see how long you can survive.



"ROCK4D64 REPORTING FOR SERVICE"



I'm not really inclined to give *Trooper* a good review, because there are too many issues with it. However, I do accept that's a bit harsh [agreed; see *Zyzzuya* – Ed]. I'm sure if the game had been picked up, it would have been tweaked and tidied up. It's really more of a job application than a full-on game, and in that respect, it was successful. I like the premise a lot, and if the game had been tweaked and expanded so it played better and had more to do, then it could have been a winner and may have seen a full release. Worth playing for historical purposes.

PRESENTATION: 65%

A unique fast-loader and decent arcade-style title screen, but little else of note.

GRAPHICS: 65%

Somewhat rough and ready, yet effective in their own way – especially the big ol' ship.

SOUND: 34%

Nothing more than simple FX.

HOOKABILITY: 68%

There's some appeal in blasting through a sci-fi landscape.

LASTABILITY: 50%

Unrefined gameplay and a lack of variety draw a halt to proceedings.

OVERALL 57%

An interesting first effort from future GOLD MEDAL winner Rob Stevens.



adventure



RESEARCH PROJECT: Binary code addiction as a means of controlling the world.
HEAD SCIENTIST: Prof NORMAN NUTZ PhD, Bsc, KP
RESEARCH EQUIPMENT: C64, MEGA65, Cray-2
LAB ASSISTANT: The Geek



Oh, it's you again! Has it really been two months already? But you know how it is. Time flies when you're old, especially when you're as old as I am. For a

youngster like you, on the other hand, time passes particularly slowly. Time often passes slowly for The Geek, too, especially when I torture him in the lab, again. And again. Only last week I forgot to untie him from the rectal laser and he spent the

whole weekend in the lab's experimental area. What can I say? Sometimes you just forget you're an arse. But what if you woke up and no one remembered you? That's exactly what we want to look at in our feature on the game *Memory Lane*.

ADVENTURE REVIEW

MEMORY LANE

— ComSha, 2023



he game welcomes us in a brown tone characteristic of the

Commodore 64. Fans of the ZX Spectrum will probably say cheekily, that was to be expected. In fact, the choice of colour takes some getting used to, even for the spoilt eyes of the C64 conossieurs. Fortunately, the author uses the Z-machine and, in addition, Ozmo by Fredrik Ramsberg and Johan Berntsson; an extremely powerful and versatile Commodore interpreter. This makes it possible without any problems to switch to the so-called night scheme, which presents itself in a much less eye-cancer-inducing colour combination of turquoise lettering on a black background. All it takes is a simple press of the F1 key and the gag reflex subsides. Ah that's much better, isn't it?

You don't get much of a story at the intro. The protagonist wakes up and realises that he can't hear anyone, as would normally be the case for most. The player is also warned that he is still sleepy and might have problems remembering things. This sounds a lot like

```
You just woke up and notice that you
don't hear anyone unlike usually. You're
still sleepy and might have troubles
remembering things.
```

```
Memory Lane
A world where you don't exist.
```

```
Release 2 / Serial number 230311 /
Inform v6.41 PunyInform v4.1
```

```
Bedroom
You are in your bedroom. The door is in
the west, the windows in the north.
```

```
The door is closed.
```

```
You can also see a window, a mirror, a
piggy bank, a bed, a shelf and a closet
(which is closed) here.
```



my own morning routine, except that there are also the frail, gouty bones and the difficulty in urinating.

We quickly realise that the room descriptions are functional, defy any

profligate prose, and are by no means word heavy. First of all, this is not a negative assessment, but a mere observation. It is also interesting that we got out of bed and slept there, at least apparently, with a backpack

```
Bedroom Moves: 4
Bedroom
You are in your bedroom. The door is in
the west, the windows in the north.

The door is closed.

You can also see a window, a mirror, a
piggy bank, a bed, a shelf and a closet
(which is closed) here.

> open door
It seems to be locked.

> i
You're carrying a backpack (worn).

> examine windows
A window with white frames.

> open closet
You open the closet, revealing some
clothes, a suit and a costume.

> ■
```


on our backs, as a quick glance at our inventory tells us. Now this may be a clever part of the story that has not yet unfolded, or it may not be well implemented. The only way to find out what is the case here is to keep playing the game. So that's what we're going to do. The experienced adventure game lover will immediately notice that there are a multitude of objects already in the first room. When you put all this together, *Memory Lane* presents itself as a puzzlefest, where the interaction with objects is a significant part of the game design.

After a short time, we find a note that provides information about an essential game mechanic: with the verb RECALL/REMEMBER, you can remember things and it quickly becomes clear to the attentive player where *Memory Lane* gets its memory name. For example, we learn about a mysterious silver key that the protagonist always uses to lock his room so that his little brother doesn't wake him. This proves to be a fresh concept and provides important insights in the course of the game.

```
Bedroom Moves: 4
Bedroom
You are in your bedroom. The door is in
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The door is closed.

You can also see a window, a mirror, a
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You're carrying a backpack (worn).

> examine windows
A window with white frames.

> open closet
You open the closet, revealing some
clothes, a suit and a costume.

> ■
```

Memory Lane is okayish in implementation; a little polish would have done the title better. Here is an example:

**> EXAMINE COSTUME
A REALLY CHEAP
COSTUME. IT REMINDS
YOU OF A SPOILED
ROYALTY. THE
COSTUME HAS A TINY
CUT AT THE SHOULDER.**

**> EXAMINE CUT
YOU CAN'T SEE ANY
SUCH THING.**

Such moments unfortunately have a detrimental effect on immersion. If a game is stingy with verbosity, this is not necessarily a bad thing, but in *Memory Lane*, essential information is sometimes missing, which in my case had a negative effect on the playing experience. When the protagonist leaves his bedroom, he finds himself in the living room. There, the room description describes possible exits, namely the

bathroom to the north and the kitchen to the south. The bedroom to the east can be imagined, after all, we just came from there. Unfortunately, the corridor to the west is completely concealed. Unfortunately, this is a common thread throughout the game. If you go to

the kitchen, for example, no reference is made to possible exits. That doesn't sound so bad at first, but it made me feel insecure and led me to try out all the directions in every room of the game, just to fight against the fear of missing something.

The puzzles in the game are well worked out, but are also quite mechanical, so you shouldn't expect anything with significant wow effects, but more in the area of USE object A with object B. Combined with the RECALL/REMEMBER logic presented at the beginning. However, the result is still a fresh and exciting adventure with a few shortcomings that could be remedied with a little polish in a future update.

comsha.itch.io/memorylane

Atmosphere	74%
Puzzle Factor	76%
Interaction	79%
Lastability	73%
Overall	75%



"STAY STILL
DAMMIT!"



Autumn is here and the nights are drawing near. The gallery is awaiting us, so let's unlock the door, draw back the curtains, flick on the lights, and wander through the halls.

You'll find the gallery packed full of no less than two wonderful images, and I hope you get as much enjoyment from them as I do. Leave your coats on the hook by the door and follow me...

Animal Medley by iLKke | 2018

A fantastic PETSCII cassette inlay here that will have you standing on your head or at the very least, turning your copy of ZZAP! 64 upside down.

With the flair and aplomb we have come to expect we have a regular menagerie on display with – to my eyes at least – an extra creature in the form of what I see as a baboon of some sort hidden in the Lion's features. But only when viewed from a certain angle.

It's cubist, it's creative, and it's class throughout!



Fat of the Land by Animal Bro | 2014

Whatever Animal Bro was drinking the day this was created, I'll have a double.

This is a fever dream made real, a surreal, pixelated step into a realm of spirits and imagination.

In a midnight wilderness, watched by disembodied eyes, caressed by strange hands, and safe in the arms of a gigantic beast, a lissome maiden sleeps like an innocent; calm and deep. Painterly, strange, and exotic; Animal Bro knows how to deliver, and does so in spades.

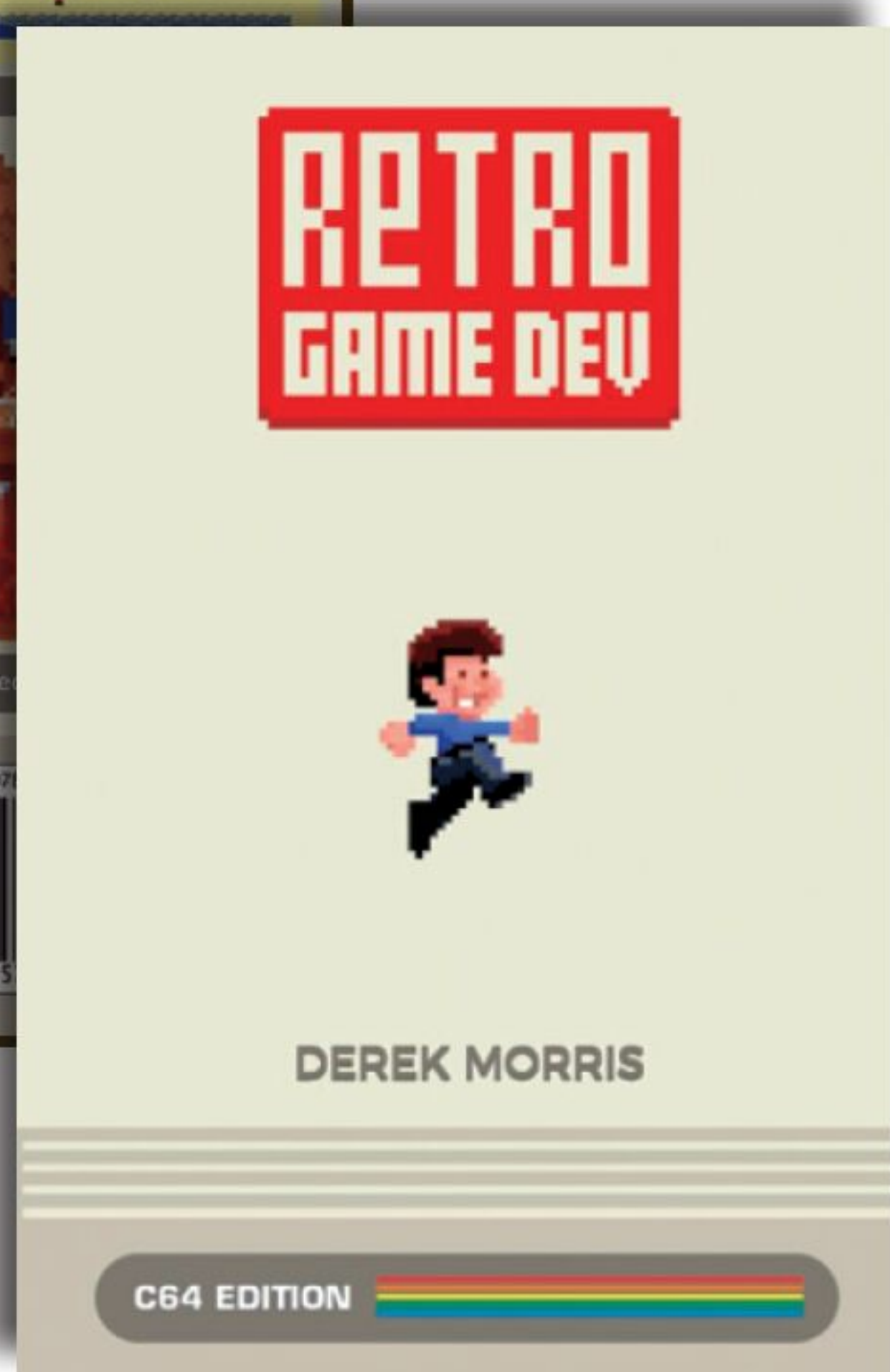
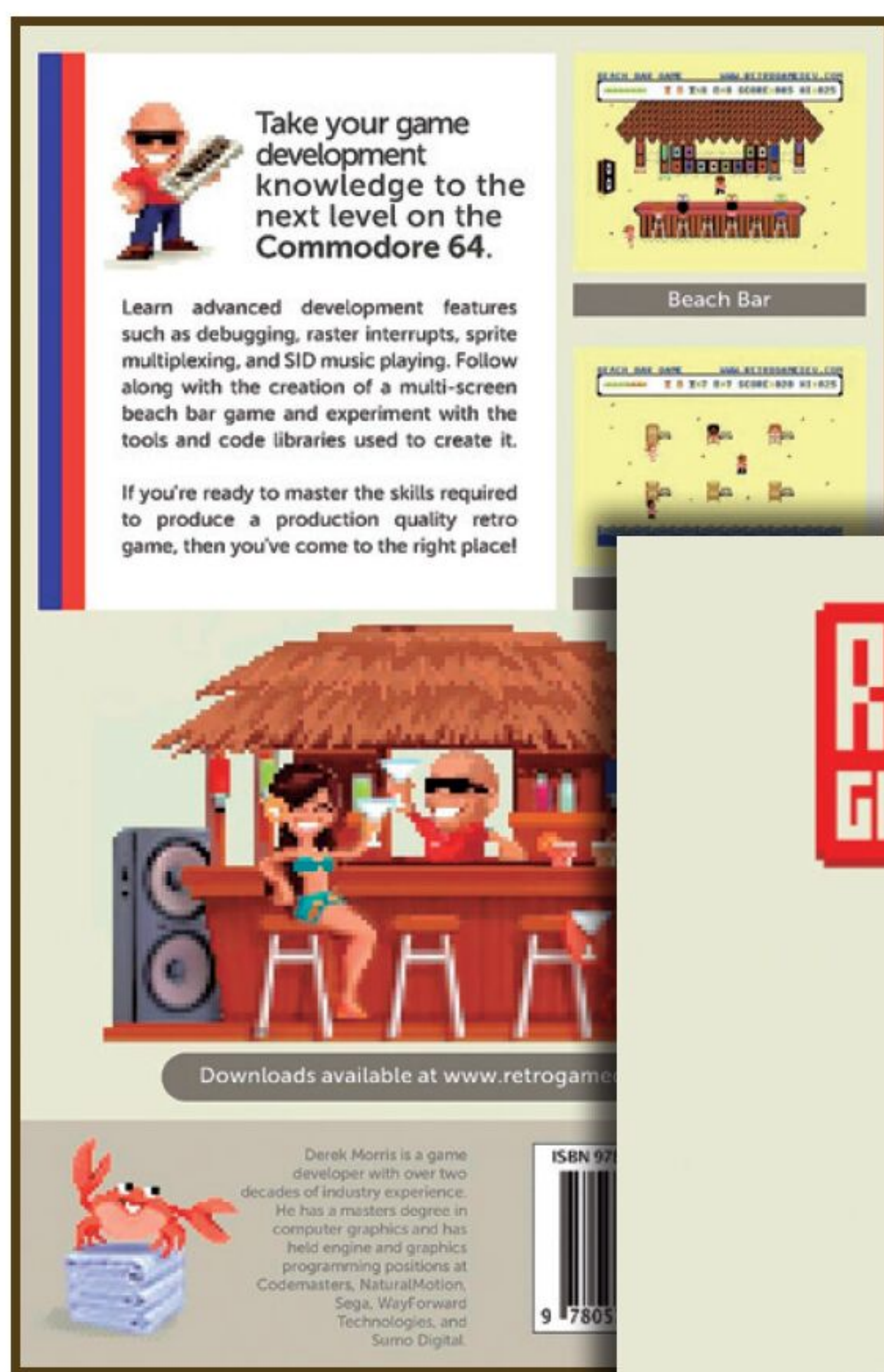


BOOK LOOK – Retro Game Dev

VOLUME THE FIRST...

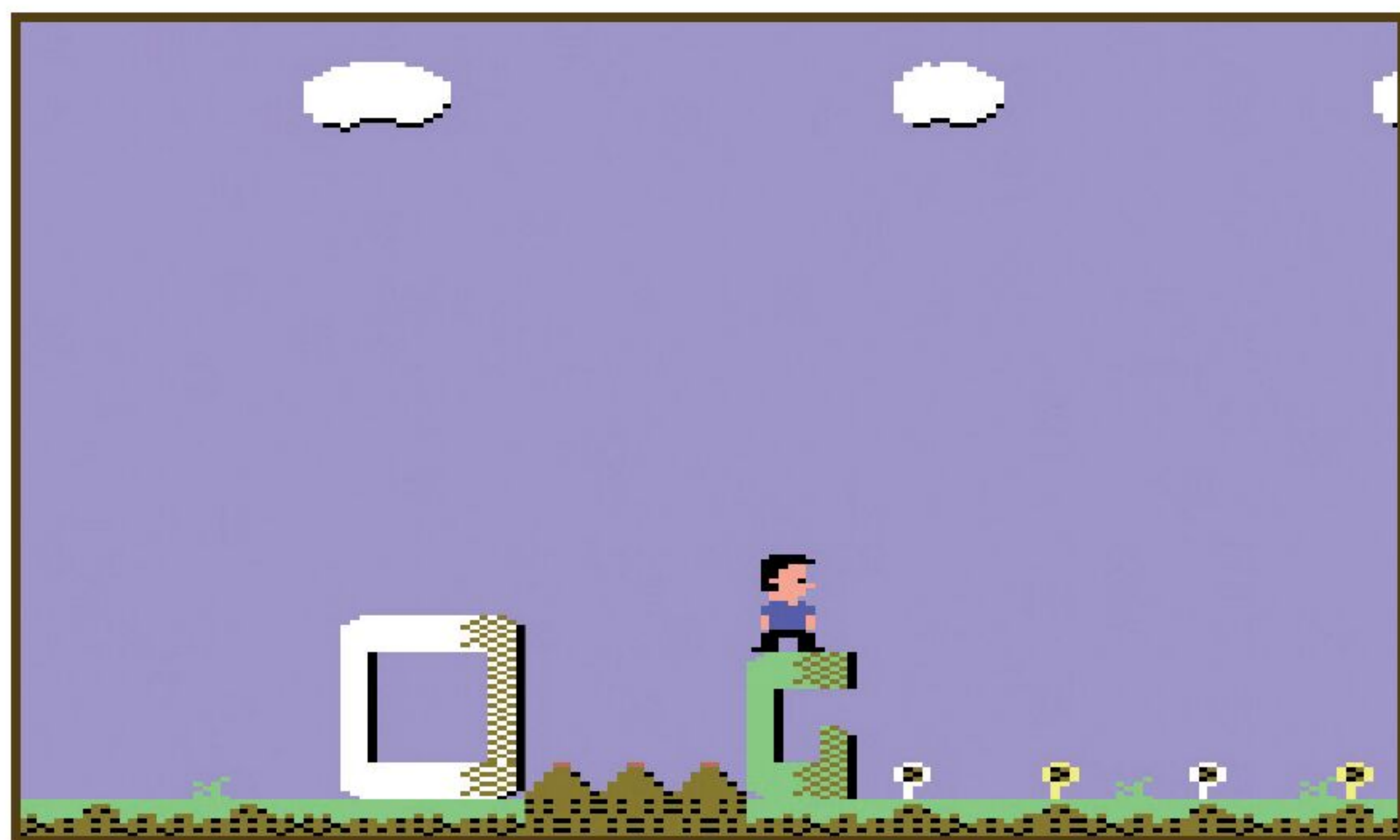
Derek's first C64 book was published in 2017, building on his twenty years of coding experience with companies

including Codemasters and Sumo Digital. Derek also wants to encourage



people to write new games for older machines.

The chapters include example code to help create two demonstration games – a single-screen Space Shooter and a horizontally-scrolling Platformer. After an introduction to hexadecimal and binary numbers and the C64 hardware, the IDE (Integrated Development Environment) used on a Windows PC is introduced. Derek used *CBM*

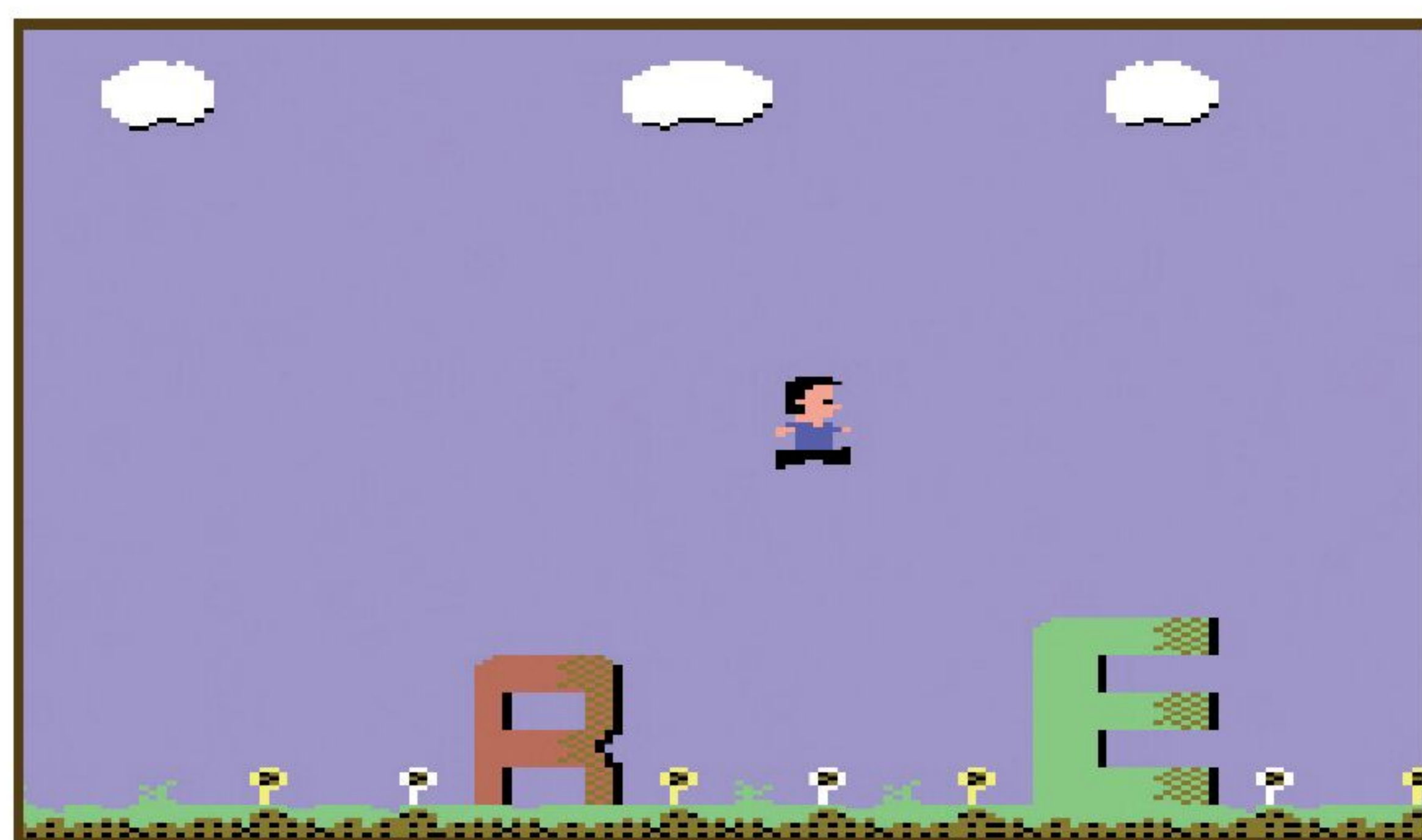


Bump 'n' grind: Testing collisions in Volume 1's platformer.



After a flashy title screen, we dive into the nitty-gritty of game setup. Onward!

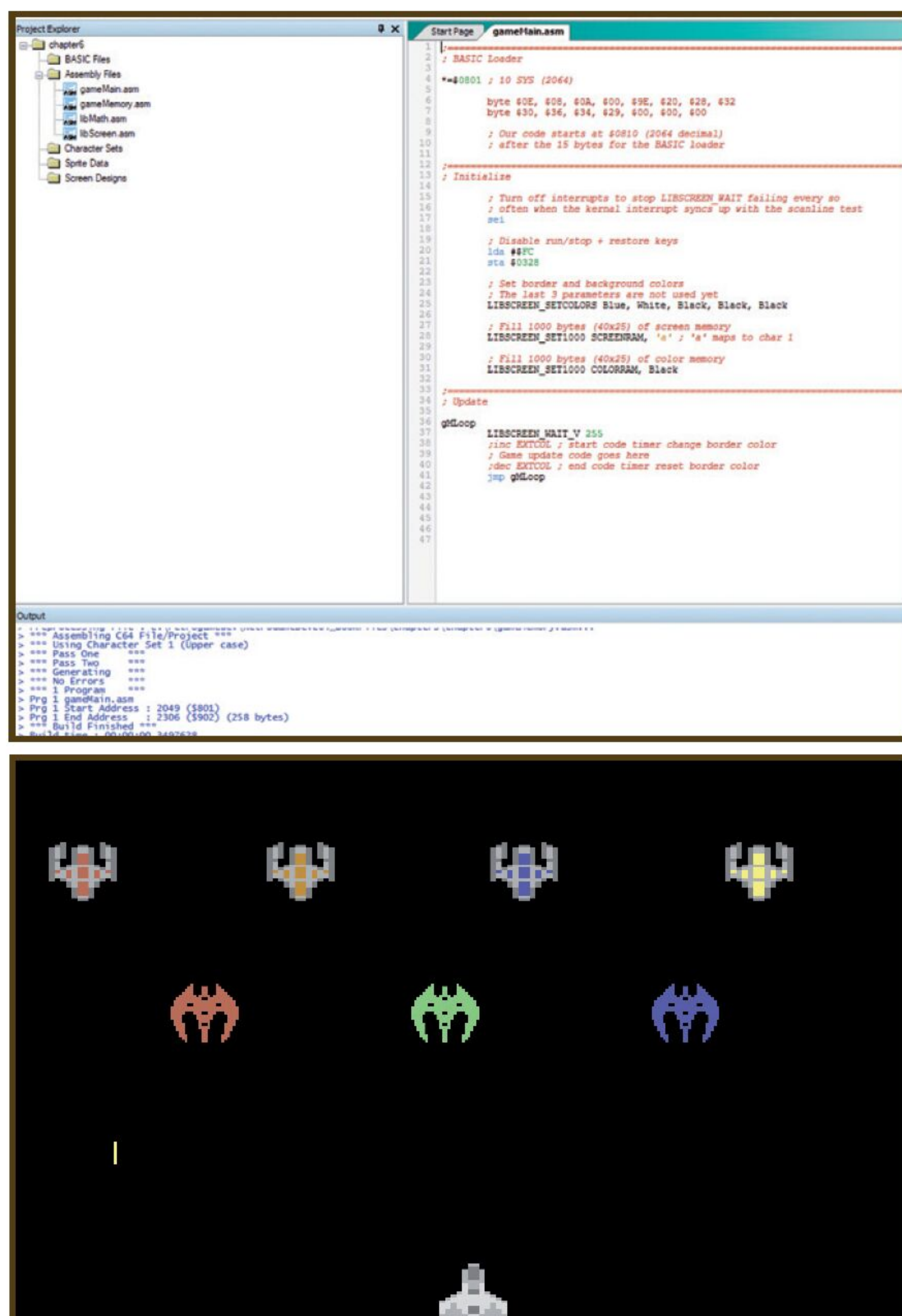
.prg Studio for this first book, allowing you to write the code and then run the assembled program straight into an emulator. *CBM .prg Studio* helpfully includes editors for sprites, characters, and sounds to be used directly in your programs. Derek's approach is to use a set of library routines; pre-written macros that are added into the final program when needed.



Boing! Jumping between those platforms.

As you read through the book and learn from the example code, there are two types of bubbles to help. The Warning bubble gives important information to check before assembling your code, while the Suggestion bubble offers ideas on how to make changes and develop on the examples. The files needed are available to download from the official website, containing the necessary tools to install (the IDE and emulator), the assembly code organised by chapter, and the pre-built examples as program files to be

DEREK MORRIS has gone and dropped a sequel to his first book. Fancy coding some C64 titles, do ya? Well, Professor Brian Strain's had a butchers at both tomes, ready to spill the beans on the pixelated prowess you can pick up!



Early code for the Space Shooter romp.

run in the emulator as you read along. The downloads for both volumes also include PDF files of four useful books on the C64 hardware and its assembly language. One important caveat to remember is that in *CBM .prg Studio*, you can “build” a single file (with F5), or the entire project (with Ctrl-F5). The latter is the recommended method, as it will ensure the library routines are assembled properly. “Routines, Assemble!”

The first book is available as a Kindle download (£9.99) or print-on-demand paperback. The paperback is in black & white (£11.99) or colour (£19.99) forms, while the Kindle edition is colour. The website also includes a couple of games that expand and improve on the basic (ahem) examples from the first book.

SECOND BYTE...

Volume 2 introduces more advanced topics, through a single example game called *Beach Bar*, with multiple screens. This time a different development environment is used – Visual



Studio Code and Kick Assembler for Windows, Linux, or macOS. The completed



CharPad allows you to design characters and screens.

code can be sent straight to an emulator, or the debugger. Downloading the files from the official site gives all the tools needed, the assembly files, and pre-built program files to try out in an emulator. You can also download the chapter files from Volume 1, converted to Kick Assembler.

Visit the official website for links to buy the books, download accompanying files, and an online forum packed with help and advice. Dive in, retro rascals!: retrogamedev.com

The text assumes knowledge of the first book and familiarity with assembly language. The Warning and Suggestion bubbles return, helping to highlight key points to check, and ways to improve on the code given. New ideas introduced include debugging (to see how the code is working or... not), and profiling (for example, using border colour changes to see how much raster time a routine is taking). Sprites and graphics are created with *SpritePad* and *CharPad* respectively this time, free versions of which are included in the download.

Billy the Barman takes centre stage as the main character of *Beach Bar*, moving with the joystick around four linked screens filled with impatient customers and crabs [*must've been some night out -Ed*].



The start of the completed *Beach Bar* game from Vol. 2.

Flow charts and code snippets explain how elements work together. Advanced concepts such as collisions, sound effects, and game “flow” help the reader understand



Kapow! Testing collisions in Volume 1's Platform game.



A froopy dude always knows where his towels are in *Beach Bar*. Just don't mention the crabs.

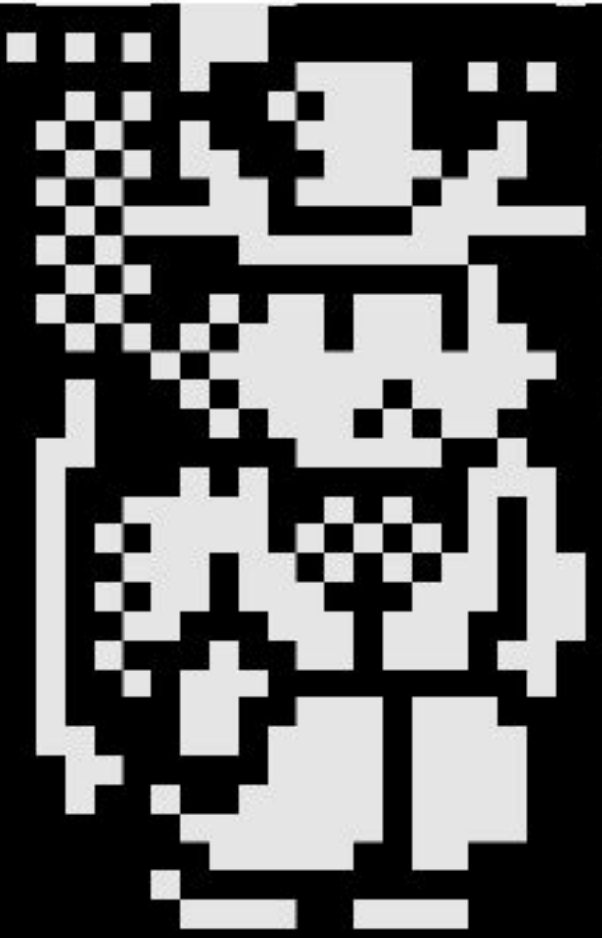
how the game works. A pre-made SID tune is suggested and the code to play it given, although this volume does not dwell on the actual creation of music and sound effects (here using pre-made effects, direct code exported from the utility *GoatTracker* – *Jeff Minter* would approve). The book ends with a list describing the library code routines, as well as web links for handy dandy resources.



The second book is available from Amazon as a colour Kindle download (£9.99), black & white paperback (£14.99), or full colour paperback (£21.99). Derek is currently working on a companion volume for NES game development. Boo hiss!

VERDICT

Pair these books up and you've got a great guide for any budding C64 coder. Mind you, the learning's a bit of a climb. But, fret not! A bit of tinkering here and there does wonders. The demo games? A smorgasbord of pixelated potential! And *Beach Bar*? Fun to play and literally a master-class in design. Got the grit and a game idea bubbling away for ZZAP! 64 to someday review? The *Retro Game Dev* duo is a top-shelf pick. Get your game face on mighty coder!



PAW NOIR



Price: Exclusive to ZZAP! 64 (#15) Covermount

Developer: Cat in the Dark (2023)

Link: on.mom/nnsP



Darkness envelops the city, all very ominous in a 1920s manner. Our hero runs the *Paw Noir* detective agency, it's the end of the day and time to go home. But wait, who is this? A damsel in distress, who says the mice Mafia have stolen her balls. Of golden yarn. How can you refuse to help such a lady? Sacrifices must be made...

The aim of *Paw Noir* is to retrieve the missing yarn ball on each level. That isn't necessarily at the end, some backtracking and head-scratching may thus result. Standing in your way are large gaps, maze-like platforms, deadly spikes, and occasional fedora-hatted mice asking you to say hello to their little friends.

As a cat you are thankfully blessed with nine lives per level, and they will come in handy as you will need to utilise your previously fresh corpses to progress further. Everybody needs some... well, bodies.

Retrieve all the yarn balls and... who knows what reward lies in wait for you.



As the old saying goes, friends help you move, Areal friends help you move bodies. *[Erm, I have to cancel our hangout, I'm walking my goldfish -Ed]* There is something both morbid and hilarious about having to cart your own corpse halfway across a level to enable you to reach a previously inaccessible platform. Matters start off simple and ease you into a different way of thinking, and once you realise you can stand on the heads of mice for example, new strategies emerge. The only negative is that the game doesn't progress much further in complexity and mechanics, just the level difficulty and how many times you have to kill yourself to get to the finish line. Otherwise I'd be feline like awarding it a higher score. *[That's pawful -Ed]*





The city is veiled in mystery.
Shadows, like living creatures
hide in narrow streets.

In this noir city, nothing is
what it seems.



There's some dark things going in *Paw Noir* and it's not because of the monochrome night-time location. I can't think of any other game where your past lives help you; in this case they help by just lying there, rotting away. You can't help but chuckle as the only solution to some levels is to lug the decaying corpse of a previous life across the level to be able to cross a gap or block bullets from gun toting dogs (as you do). Bizarre is not the word. Some levels are designed to kill you (at least once) in order to succeed. You have to die to live, and one particular level is just voluntary death after death forcing you to face the horror of manipulating your suicides. As I said, this game can be dark.

PN is not graphically adventurous and the music could do with some variety, but it's a novel idea with well designed levels, which certainly entertained this budding Philip Mewlowe.



I'm not sure whether the "cats have nine lives" trope has ever been as well implemented in a game as it is here. Having to use the corpses of previous lives to reach new areas is a novel, humorous idea. Aside from that, the game is a fairly standard platformer, which is a bit of a shame. I wish they'd played more on the detective side of the game. It would have been fun to piece together a story as you progress. As it is, it does sadly end up feeling like a standard puzzle-platformer with a twist. My criticisms are not just me being catty; this is just a whisker away from greatness.



PRESENTATION: 77%

Intro story, cutscenes, cool noir look, and in-game hints.

GRAPHICS: 73%

A mixed bag of nice sprites, passable backgrounds with parallax scrolling, and oddly-sized obstacles.

SOUND: 62%

Two 1920s themed pieces that loop just a little too frequently.

HOOKABILITY: 78%

Leads you by the hand to unalive yourself. Repeatedly.

LASTABILITY: 72%

Don't be a pussy; levels get more challenging, but not much variety.

OVERALL 74%

An interesting take on the platform puzzle that needed a little more catnip.

DIG DUG

REVIVAL



Price: \$ name your own price | digital

Developer: LC-Games (2023)

Link: mysl.nl/AGxP



Can you dig it? Oh yeah! But this is no mock revival, this is a digging digging revival as LC-Games aims to revamp and improve Namco's classic 80s story of one man and his pump. Except there are no sheep here, just ruthless Pookas and fire-breathing Fygars looking to ruin your day real sharp. Move through the earth building tunnels, then pump up the jam, erm I mean

bad guys, to complete each level. Or drop a rock on their heads, bump bump.

After a while, your adversaries may attempt to teleport closer to your location to engage, and if you hang around too long, they will speed up in their pursuit. Unlike the original, all the levels are procedurally generated so no two games will be identical, if you dig me.



I dig the procedurally generated levels – a true gem on a C64. And I dug deep into the pixelated earth to try to love this.

Maybe it's that it's based on a simple game, or maybe it's the equally straightforward interpretation of it here, or maybe it's the sporadic shooting and directional oddities I encountered (a *Dig Dug* big bug?), or maybe this sentence is too long. Still, I found the music cute in the way it would stop when Doug stopped digging (that's his name right?) then start up again when he did, and the hi-res graphics do the job in spades. Still, it falls shy of striking gold in the realm of (unlicensed) C64 remakes. It's time to dig deeper for that buried treasure!



Another LC-Games attempt to revive a classic arcade game, but not one that is going to blow up and be a big hit. There is a clear upgrade here in

terms of sound and graphics. The sprites are very cute and go pop convincingly. However, after playing for a while I failed to see the benefit in the procedurally-generated levels. The increase in the monster's speed and aggression means there is very little difference between the carefully designed original levels and the difficulty of later levels here. And the higher difficulty settings on offer make it incredibly tough to survive. One for fans of the original arcade game then, but it needed more depth and extra features to appeal to me.



THIS GAME IS A HOMAGE TO DIG DUG, AN ARCADE GAME DEVELOPED BY NAMCO IN 1982. IN THIS VERSION, THE PLAYFIELDS ARE GENERATED RANDOMLY.

PRESS FIRE TO CONTINUE



I have a chequered history with *Dig Dug*. I loved it on my

Atari VCS (when I was perhaps too young to know better), but the arcade version really annoys me. Thankfully, this version of the game strikes a happy medium. For me, this is down to the addition of difficulty levels. The normal level is challenging but not obnoxious, I felt able to tackle higher levels after a while, and better still, I enjoyed them. That's not to say this instantly became my favourite game, but my interest in digging and dugging is certainly revived.

PRESENTATION: 73%

Difficulty options and saving high-score tables, but not much else – no music even on the title screen.

GRAPHICS: 71%

Pixelated earth and cute sprites are recognisable from the original.

SOUND: 71%

Simple in-game music and sounds with a nice start/stop routine, sounding close to the arcade game.

HOOKABILITY: 75%

It is catchy and initially addictive through its familiarity.

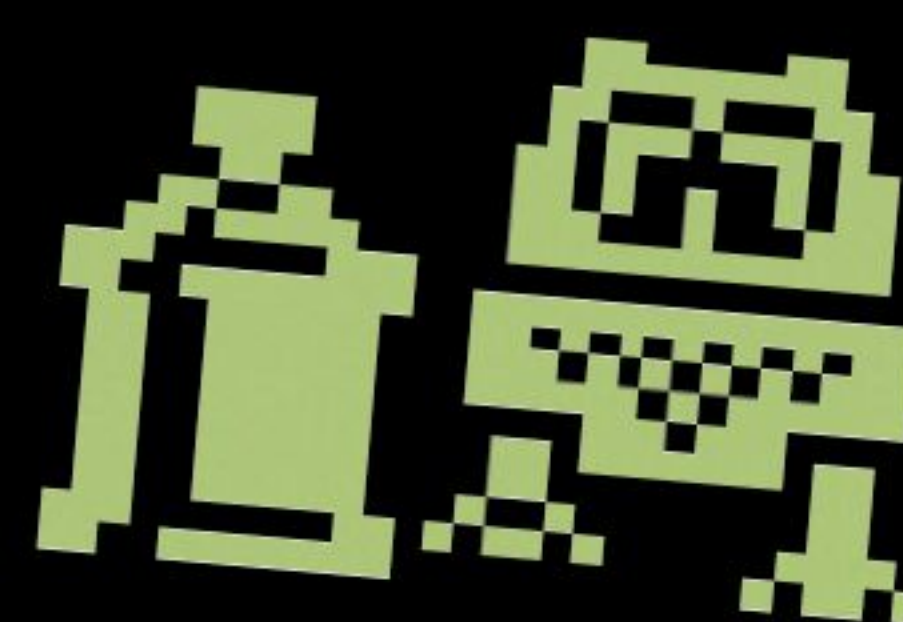
LASTABILITY: 69%

Drilling deeper, it soon grows stale – but the challenge of greater difficulties is there.

OVERALL 70%

Doug doesn't quite strike gold – a workmanlike update for the modern miner.

P.S. Fun fact, he's called Taizo Hori, not Doug. Sorry Hori.



Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: Francis “Boony” Smith (2023)

Link: on.mom/glAr



All seemed quiet as Robby the Robot tended to his prize Thyrgodian Megga Chrisanthodil flower. But wait, what’s that? The scent from the sprouting buds is attracting all manner of nasties intent on devouring the poor plant. Om nom nom. If only it was a Triffid. What a day! Time to spring into action and ward them off long enough for the poor petal to bloom properly.

Pssst is a loving port of the Ultimate classic on its 40th birthday. Three different cans of bug spray are available, that in a rock/paper/scissors fashion will either kill, stun, or have no effect on each insect. However you “can” only carry one can at a time, and must drop it to pick up another. Collect the compost to help the growth rate, then spray spray spray and pray pray pray to keep the bugs at bay bay bay!

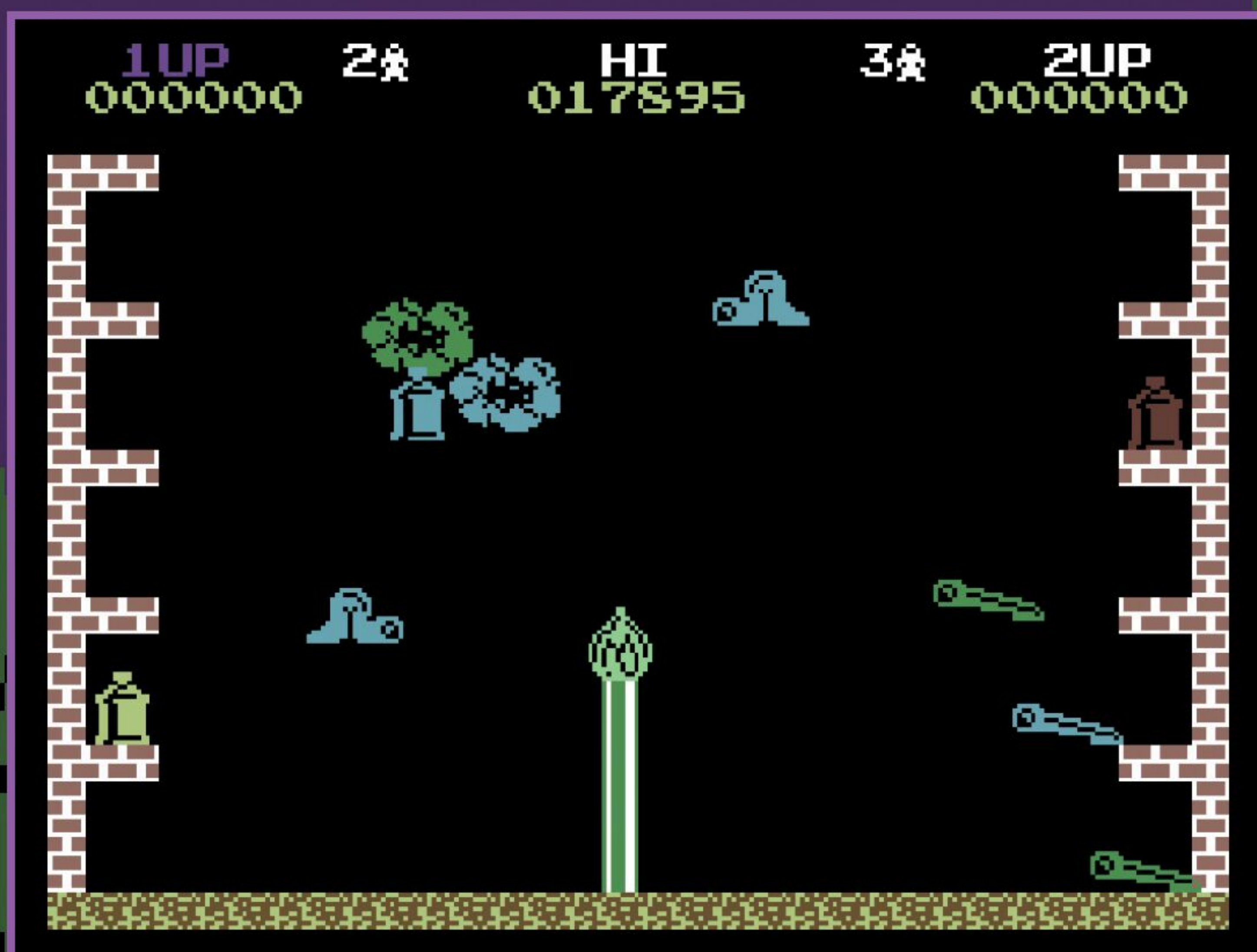


Unlike say *Jet-Pac*, there was never a conversion of this game planned by Ultimate so it’s nice to see one on what is its 40th birthday. The biggest design flaws I had when playing it on the Speccy were that you couldn’t insta-swap the cans over – you had to drop one before picking up another – which was second only to the fact the nasties emerge from the edges of the screen right where you are trying to pick the cans up from! Many frustrating unavoidable deaths ensue. On the other hand the gameplay experience is slower, so matters are not quite as vicious. Now, anyone fancy converting *Trans-Am*? [Yes Michael – KITT-Ed]





TEST



I always had a few issues with this on the Spectrum, and now it's on the C64, I find there are similar issues. The main one, which is common to both versions, is that the sprites are too big for the playing area. In the original, that was compounded by everything moving too fast, making it really

difficult. Here, the game is much slower, which means it lacks urgency and so it's not as much fun as it could be. That said, it's a fairer challenge than the original, so if you get into it then it's likely to keep you going for a while. It's well enough programmed, but there's not that much can be done to get around the design issues. Worth a play, though.



PRESENTATION: 72%

Nice title screen and help pages, however nothing else aside from one or two player options.

GRAPHICS: 59%

Nicely animated and nice movements around the screen, but belie their Spectrum origins.

SOUND: 78%

Bouncy title and in-game tracks.

HOOKABILITY: 74%

A fun game the C64 didn't get back then – add 2 to this score if you haven't played it before.

LASTABILITY: 60%

The general frustration issues and cramped playing area will dampen enthusiasm regardless.

OVERALL 65%

A good conversion of a flawed game design that doesn't quite blossom.



Back Issue 14

Paul Davies emits a potent blast from the past with Issue #16 of ZZAP! 64



Imagine's latest release, *Green Beret*

Beret hits the Commodore 64 and I can only guess it's a bit of a cracker given that it's found itself on the front cover. Elsewhere, it seems that Durell Software's *Saboteur* has made its way over from the Spectrum, as well as *Tau Ceti*. How will these fare in the land of Commodore compared to Sinclair? I guess we'll find out.



THALAMUS

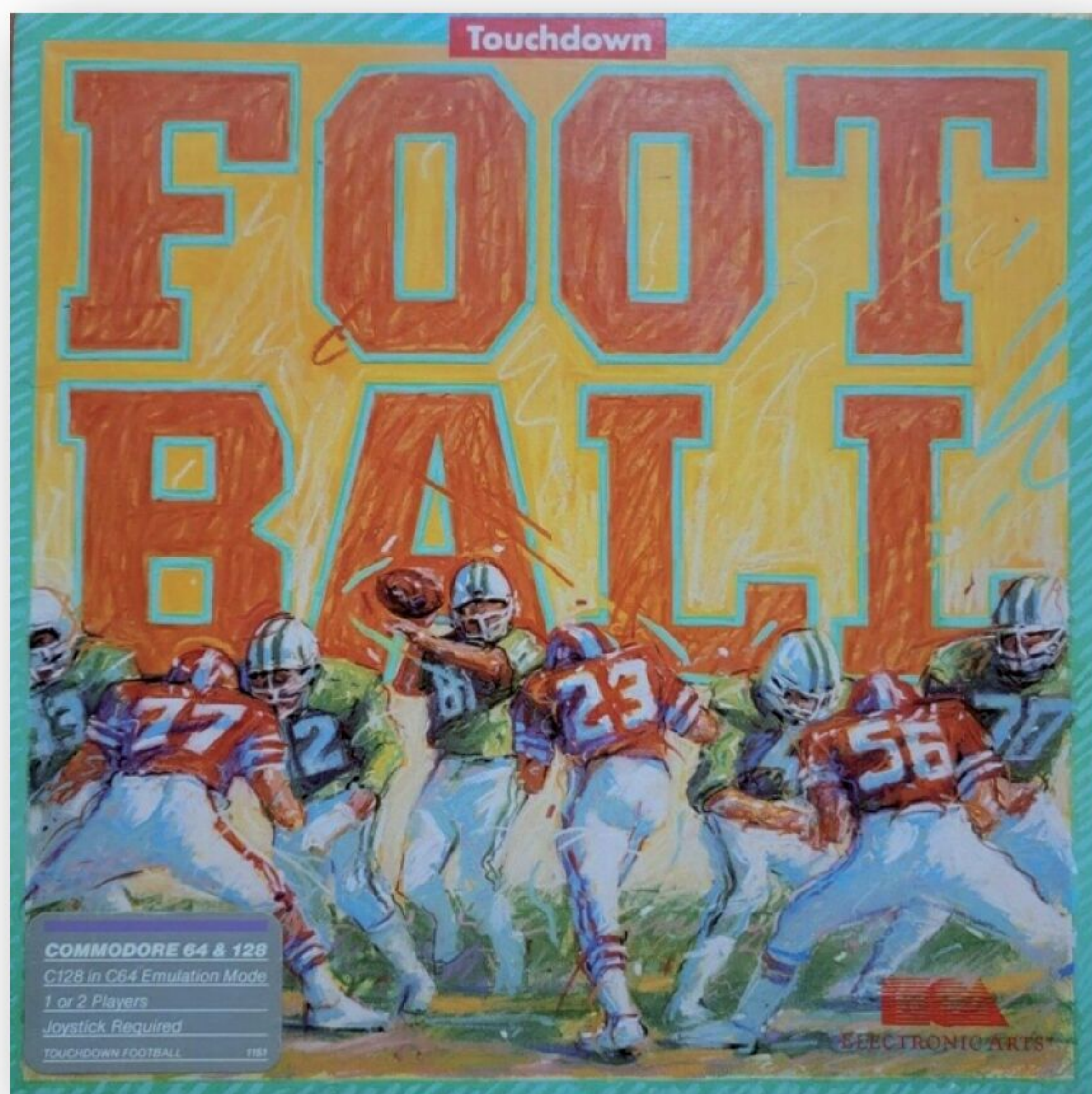
have him review games for ZZAP! any more (not that he'd be biased... would he? No!), so he leaves his position at the mag. Sad times, but all the best, Gary!

Now, last month I promised you some reviews of the worst games out there at the moment, although that didn't happen, for some reason. Not one to break my promises, I shall not let you down this month. I may be a bit late, but I'll always deliver – whether you like it or not. We all know that *Green Beret* is very likely to get a SIZZLER so I'm not touching that at the moment. Let's see what god-awful dross is out there to sink our teeth into. You're welcome.

First up, it's *Touchdown Football* – don't get too excited, it's the American variant of that particular sport and if that wasn't disappointing enough, it's god-awful too. Tiny, ugly sprites, sluggish scrolling, and terrible beeps, bops, and jangles add very little or nothing to the overall

A certain actor playing a certain role in a certain film once proclaimed he, "ate *Green Berets* for breakfast". I'm not sure if Mr. Schwarzenegger was referring to the elite commando unit of the US or copies of the newly-released game on the cover of this month's mag. If it's the latter, then I'd like to see how he'd get on chewing open the cassettes and swallowing the tape spaghetti. Yum.

Big news first and a ZZAP! stalwart is leaving for pastures new. Sir Gary Liddon will no longer be part of the ZZAP! team by the time the next issue is released as he's gone and got himself a new job. Doesn't he realise we need him here?! He's been appointed Technical Director of a new software house named Thalamus. Being in that kind of position at a software house means that it may not be entirely fair to



appeal, and certainly won't have you coming back for more. The most cutting comment comes from Mr. Rignall, as he states, "I don't like the football

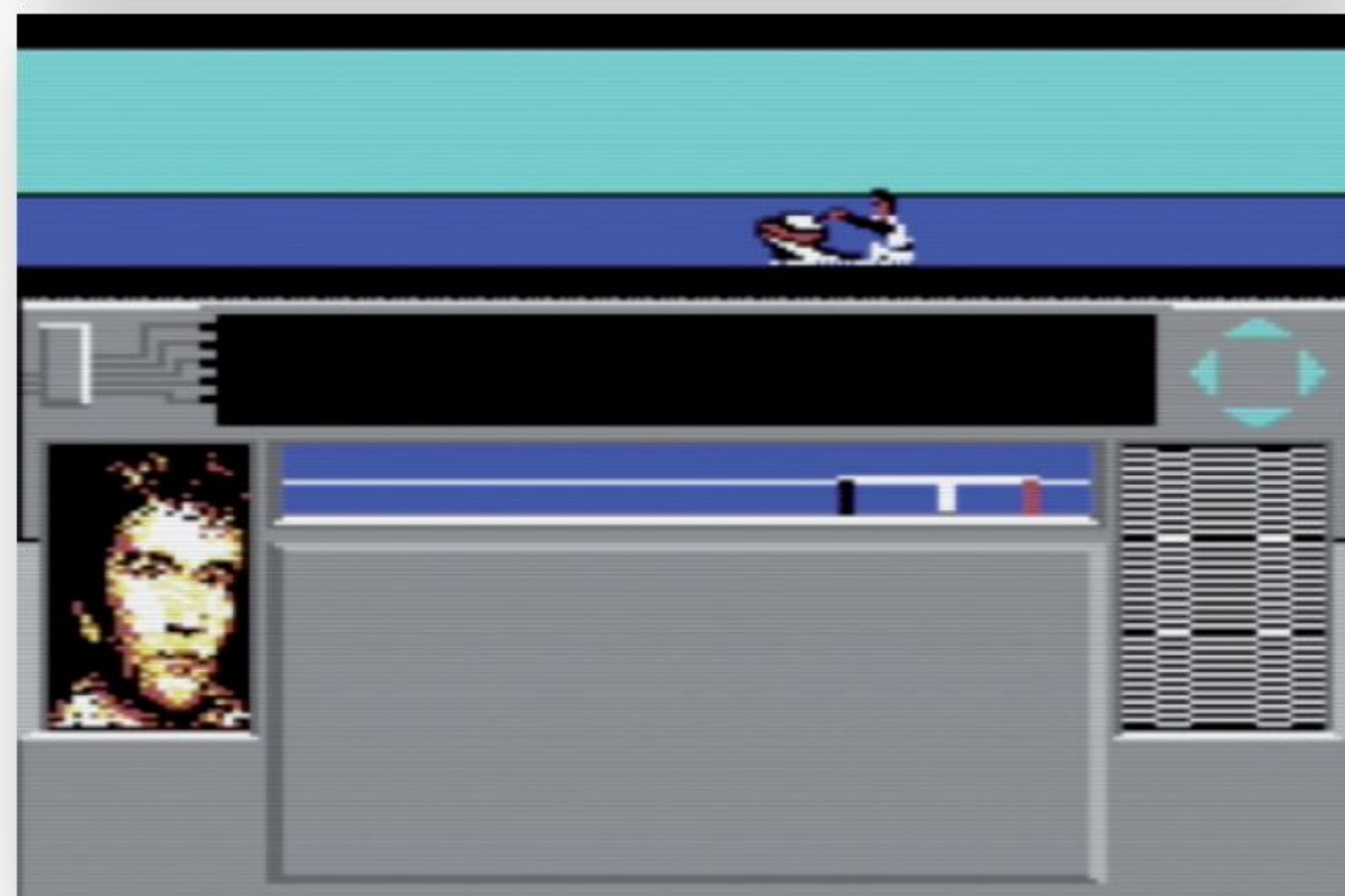
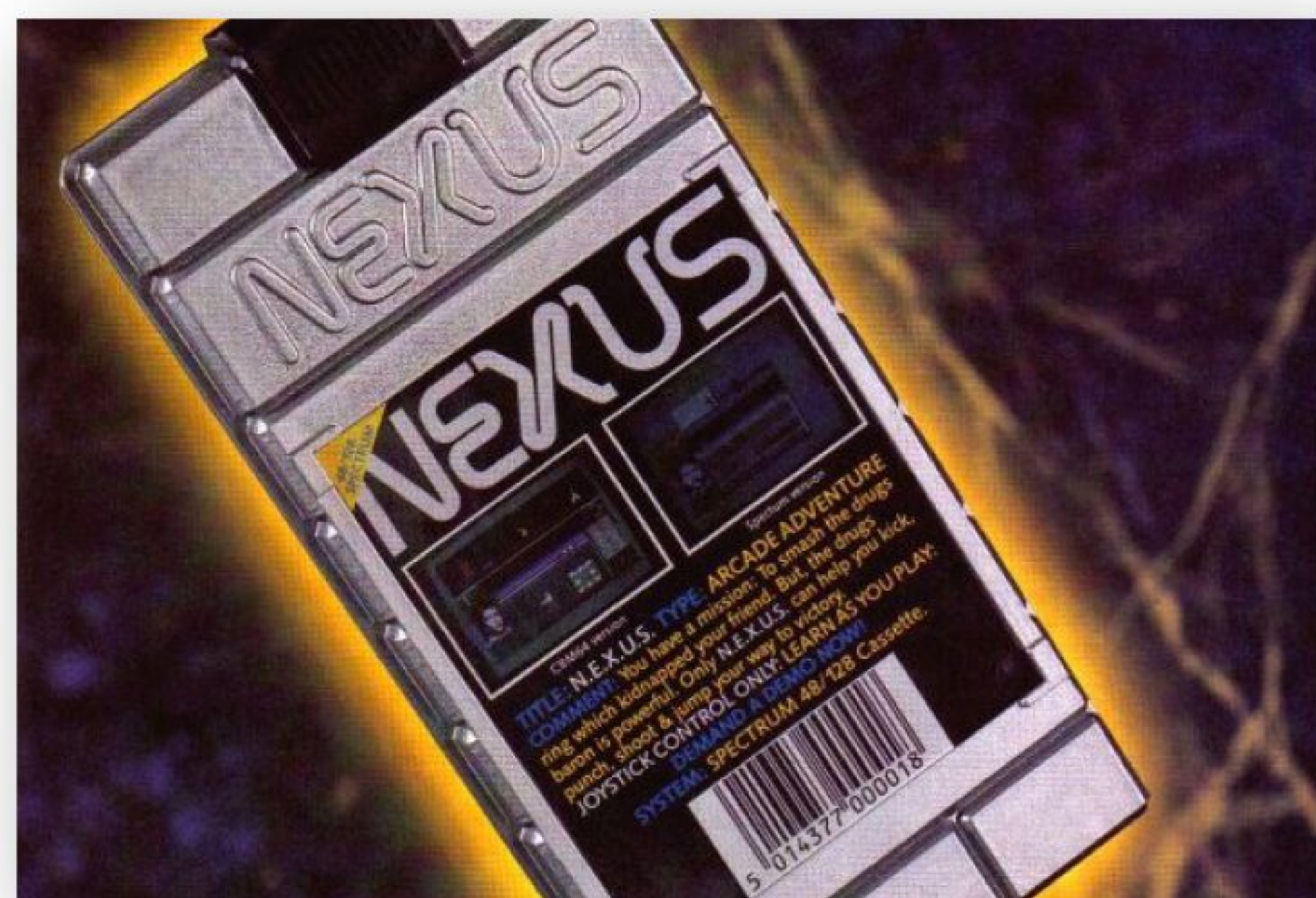


action in this game, it looks like a clever prediction of Chernobyl 2006 after all the demented mutant things that pathetically hobble about the pitch on their diseased legs can only be the product of heavy fallout". So... not a fan then, Jaz? 47% seems like a bit much considering that damning review and also considering that the boobs at Ariolasoft wants you to shell out £9.95 for it. Golly! As the Americans would say.

Next up comes a game called *Nexus*, where you play an ex-Vietnam war hero turned journalist for a local rag, who gets called out of retirement (from being a war hero I presume) to head to Columbia, where a

colleague of yours (from the newspaper, I also presume) has been investigating a drugs racket [from *Tennis I presume -Ed*] but has got a little too involved and got themselves kidnapped. Your Editor, knowing your history as a Rambo wannabe, asks you to travel to Columbia and rescue said colleague. Though whilst you're at it, he also asks if you can come back with the major scoop on the whole thing – doesn't want much, does he? Search the complex in which your colleague is being held to find information on this rather dangerous drug gang, rescue your colleague, and then head off into the sunset whilst you detonate the

whole building from a distance like the end of some other action film. It all sounds very exciting, genuinely, though maybe the idea is better than the product. Penn states that the game plays like it's "unfinished", and maybe that's where it should have been left, despite the amount of time it's been said it took to develop. Whilst Mr. Sumner advises that despite the story having the makings of something quite interesting, it's a poor man's *Impossible Mission*. Bugs aplenty await with on-screen glitches as far as the eye can see! Additionally, you can (unintentionally) walk through walls! Erm, cool.



You can also listen to some repetitive tunes should that tickle your fancy. The only



redeeming feature, it seems, is the packaging which has uses varying from a pretend shaver, door stop, or you can do what Mr. Liddon suggests, “*Ski down Mount Kilimanjaro with it strapped to your feet*”. What a versatile-sounding game. Hmmm... moving on...

When you think of The Amazon, you think of the river, snakes, the rainforest, a shop, angry monkeys, and spiders that would make your eyes bleed. Literally, actually.

Well, you certainly don’t think of a plane crashing there, killing all but two of its passengers, and then one of those two survivors being even more unlucky to be kidnapped by the legendary Amazon Women. The other unfortunate survivor then has to navigate her way through The Amazon (evil spiders n’ all, I would imagine) to try and find the other survivor... who is actually her daughter! HOW UNLUCKY CAN YOU ACTUALLY GET? Very unlucky it turns out, as you play *Legend of the Amazon Women*;

how long you’ll play it is anyone’s guess, mind. It’s a walk-along beat ‘em up – but that’s also the gameplay in a nutshell [*that sounds like cool packaging*



too! –Ed] Walk a bit, club a woman over the head. Walk a bit more, club a woman over the head, not even the *Tir Na Nog*-inspired graphics can help it because it’s more *Tir Na Not*. There’s *not* a positive word to be said about it in the review. Awful stuff, ZZAP! would have you believe, and I do believe them, erm, us. So, how unlucky could you get? Well, you could end up paying £9.95 for this game for a start. But not on Amazon.

The bad games don’t end there – no, no, no! What if I told you there was a game out this month that scored as low as 9% overall? Don’t believe me? It’s true, and going by the name of the game, I am honestly shocked to my core that this could be so awful. *Groovy Garden*? How



could this ever go wrong? In a world where we’re told vegetables are great and everyone should love/ eat them, *Groovy Garden* says otherwise. These vegetables are evil. They’re worse than evil, they’re the “Vegan Rights Militia” (yes, you read that right) and



their roots are not to be trusted, as they fly about attacking any man, Amazon woman, or child who even looks at a vegetable with a crazed, hungry look in their eye. Well, maybe not every one, but the main character in this game at least. Armed with an Agent Orange Dispenser... (Do I have to keep writing this?) [Yes. -Ed] (Fine!) ...you have the power to zap away the unsightly, manic vegetables. The reviewers' words speak volumes. "Abysmal", "unplayable", "appalling", "a joke", and "hideous", are not really what you want to hear when you're about to part with your cash, even if it is just £1.99. As the Value for Money section states "Two quid for a 'blank' tape is excessive". Ouch!

I'd say that's enough for the bad games this month – I think you've been punished enough.

large, sharp knife and go on a stabbing quest to last through the ages. There's no time for guns, you've got some squaddies to rescue who've been captured



by the evil Commies [Commodores? -Ed], and there's no time to reload – or even to wipe the blood off your knife after each stab. That's not very hygienic. Weapons include a flame-thrower that can be picked

So what of *Green Beret*? Does it deserve its place on the cover? A ZZAP! SIZZLER and 93% would say so, I think. It's time to grab your rather

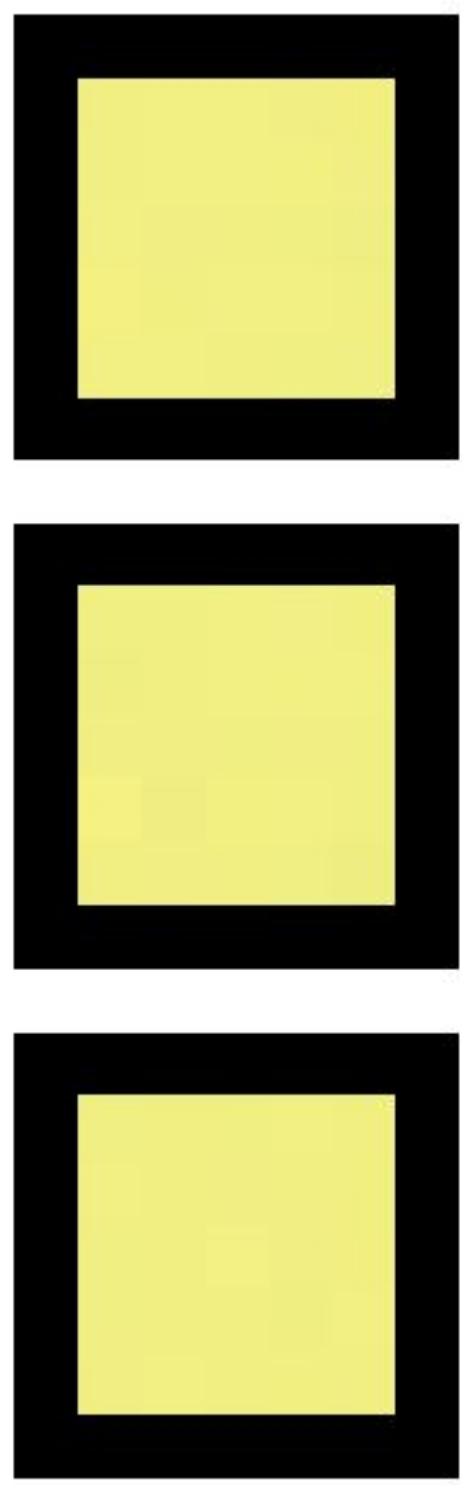
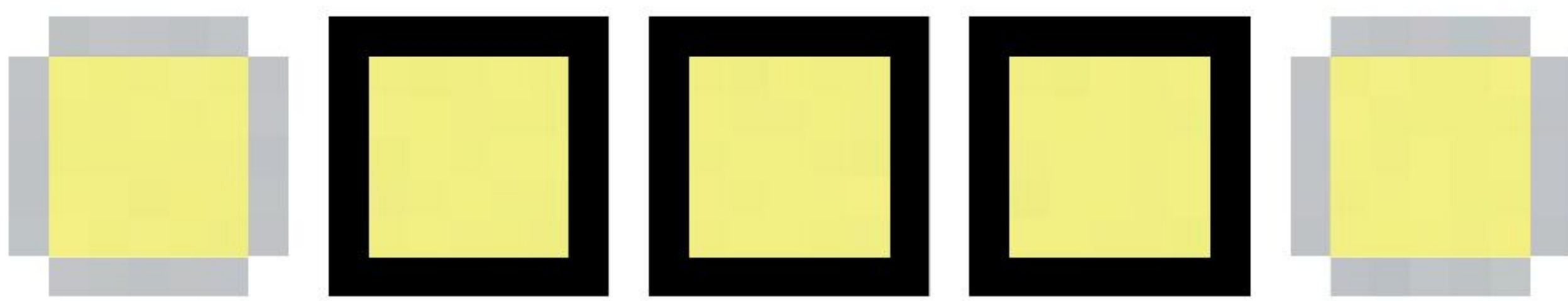


up on occasion, which will not only help on the hygiene side of things by killing all the germs but also sounds like a great bit of fun, too. It's a 'run, stab, run, stab, run, flame-thrower and repeat until all are dead' type of game, and the more I write this, the more and more I think

that this game was made for me. It's good to have a game where you can release your frustrations by screaming at your screen and unleashing hell at the same time. Is there a better style of game?

So, there we have it folks! A great way to end on a high and very positive note – talking about killing everyone in front of you with a (unhygienic) knife. Aah, lovely stuff. Time for me to head out with my £8.95, pick up a copy of *Green Beret*, and play it whilst wearing my green beret.

What? Didn't I mention I have a green beret? Yeah, it may make me look like a bad Michael Crawford impersonator, but it's what it makes you feel like *inside* that counts!

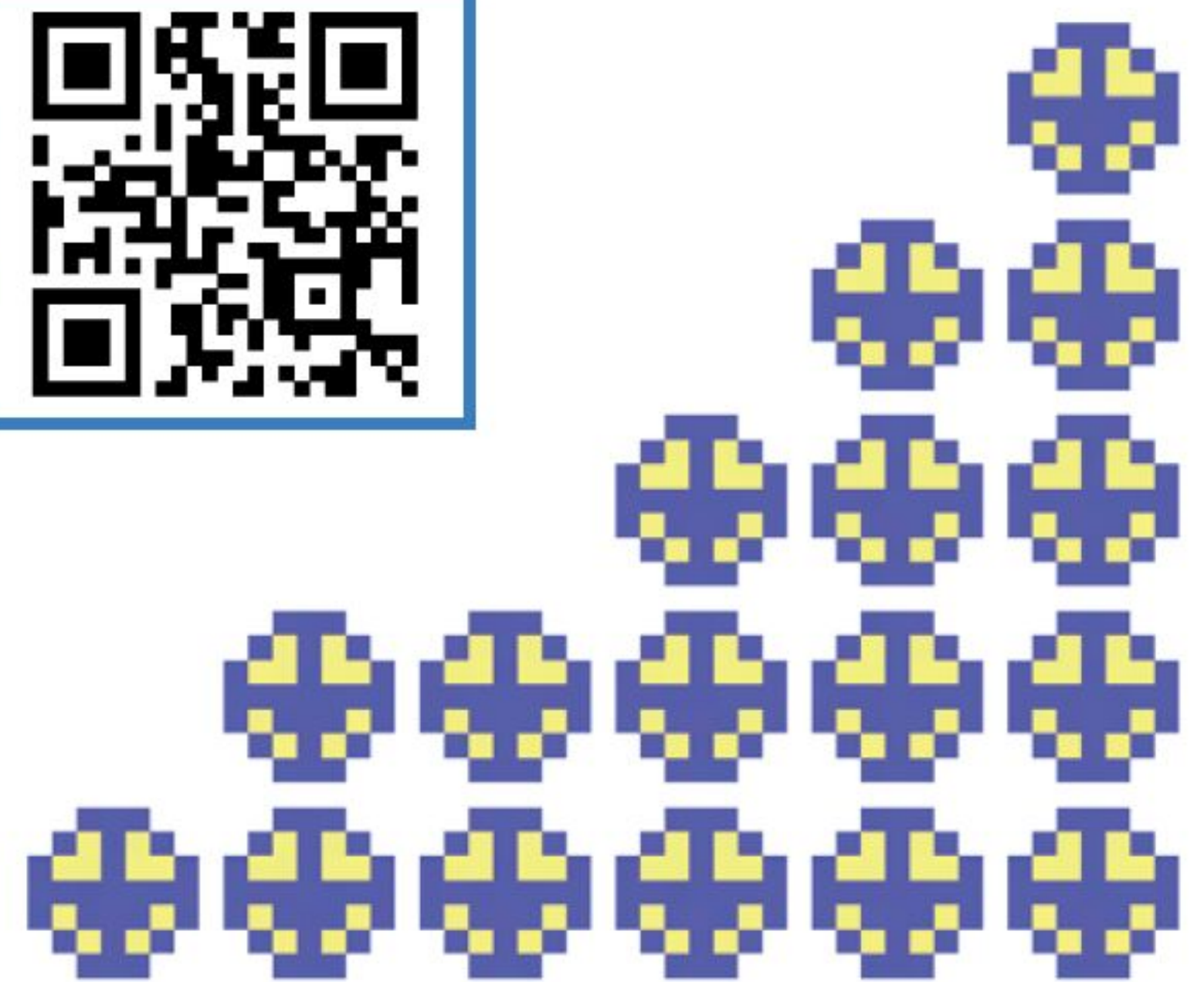


OKYE

Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: Patai Gergely (2022)

Link: on.mom/IUPd

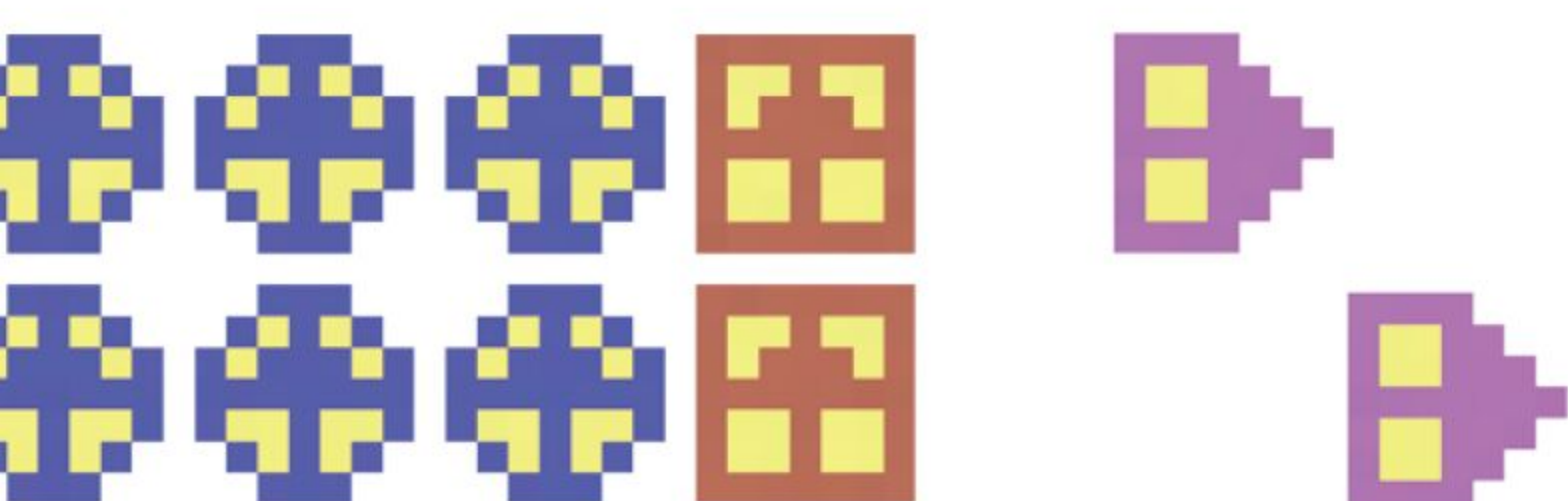
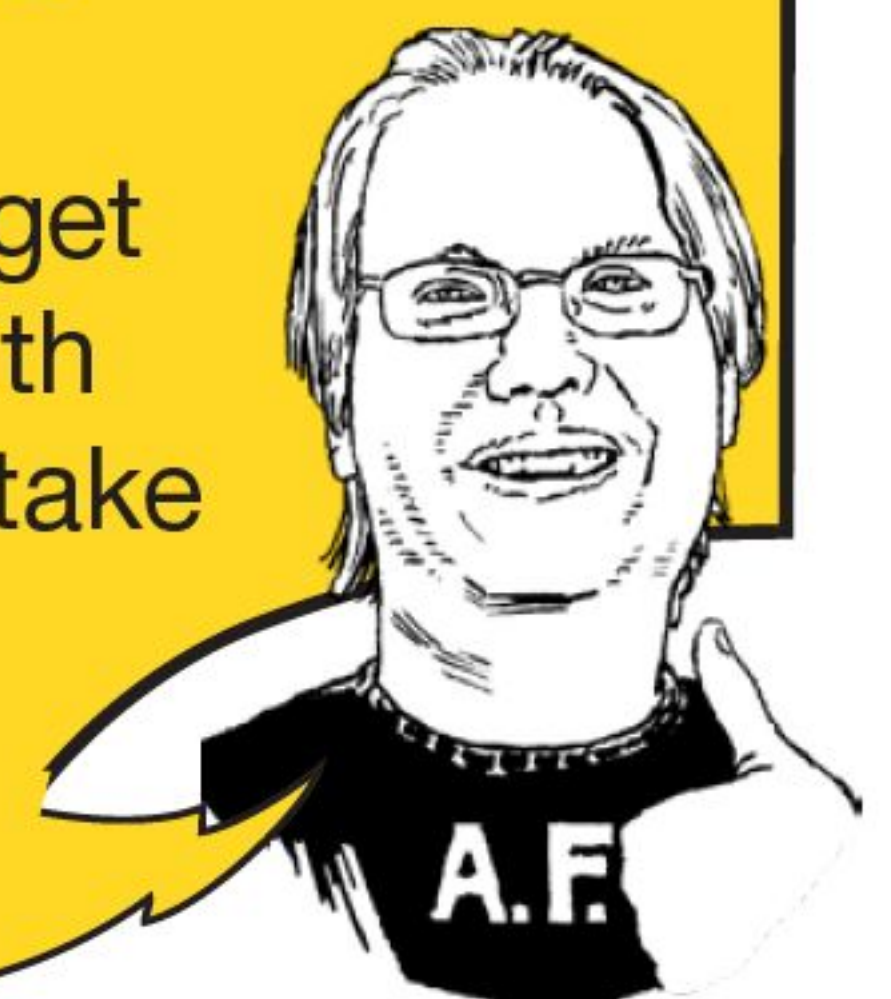


Gear up for a sparkling chase! Kye, the sprightly green orb shown above, is on a mission to nab all those glittering diamonds. Blimey, those pesky monsters are hot on his tail! He doesn't have a tail! It doesn't matter! Give a nudge to certain blocks to make 'em go "Baby Kye Kye Kye" I mean bye bye bye. Grab and drag the green blocks, but remember, once let go, gravity's the boss. Get in a pickle? No sweat, just hit restart.

Flashback to '92, Colin Garbutt gifted Windows users with *Kye*; a shareware gem that added quids to Save The Children's coffers, and presumably saved some of us kids from boredom. Fancied creating a level? It

came with a tool for that too! The C64 remix reviewed here boasts the OG's 15 classic mazes – dive into the Default set to learn the ropes – plus there's a whopping 82 fan-made challenges from years gone Kye!

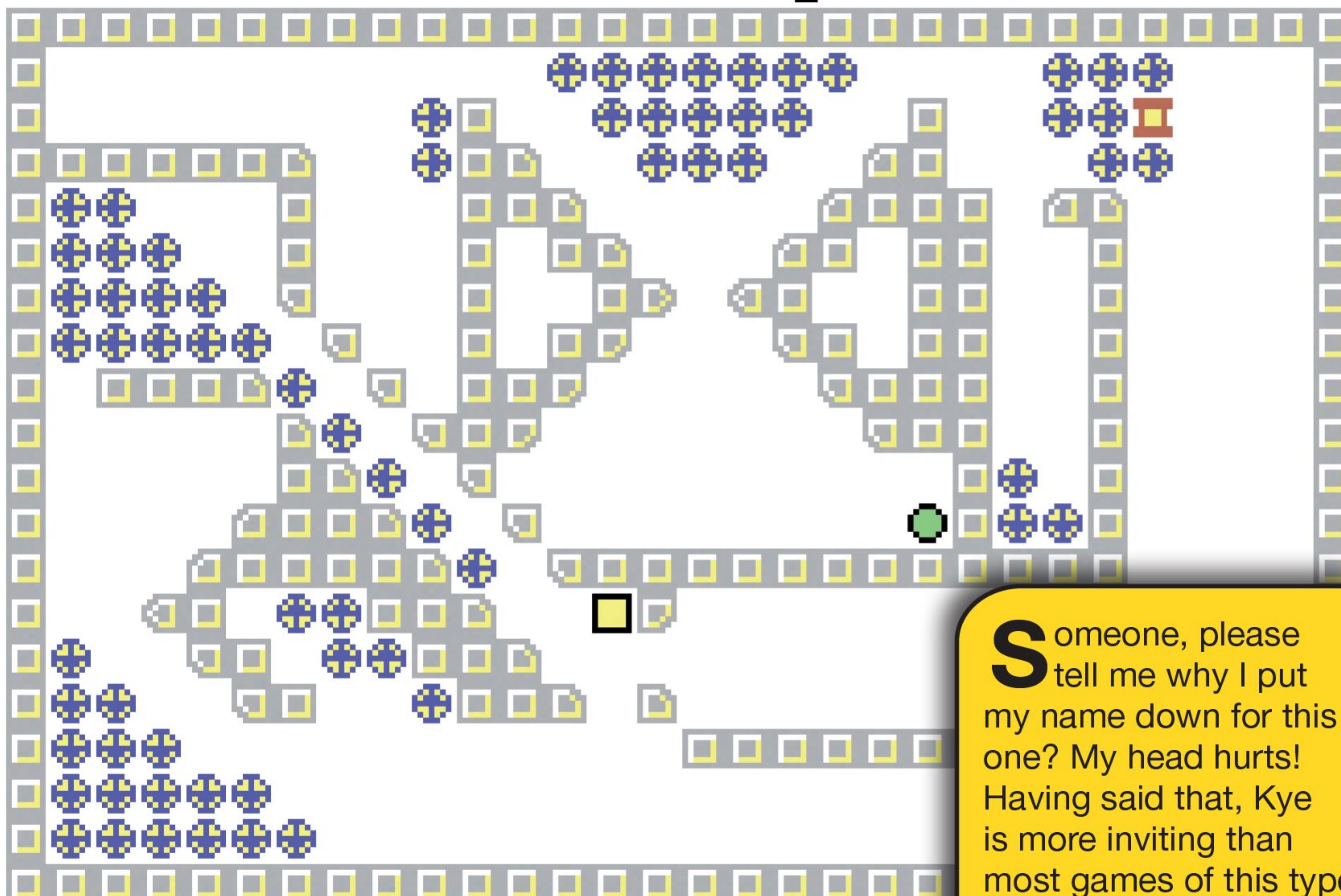
This gave a great first impression, with its bold black font and bright colours on a shining white background. And the idea is excellent, taking a new approach to *Boulder Dash* with its "boulders" able to move in four directions. However, it did start to get repetitive quite quickly. There were times when it was difficult to see the "arrows" on the pieces that will tell you which way they will move, and I found myself resetting a level repeatedly to get through it. There is a long-term challenge with all the excellent puzzles included, but it will take some serious brainpower to get through them all.





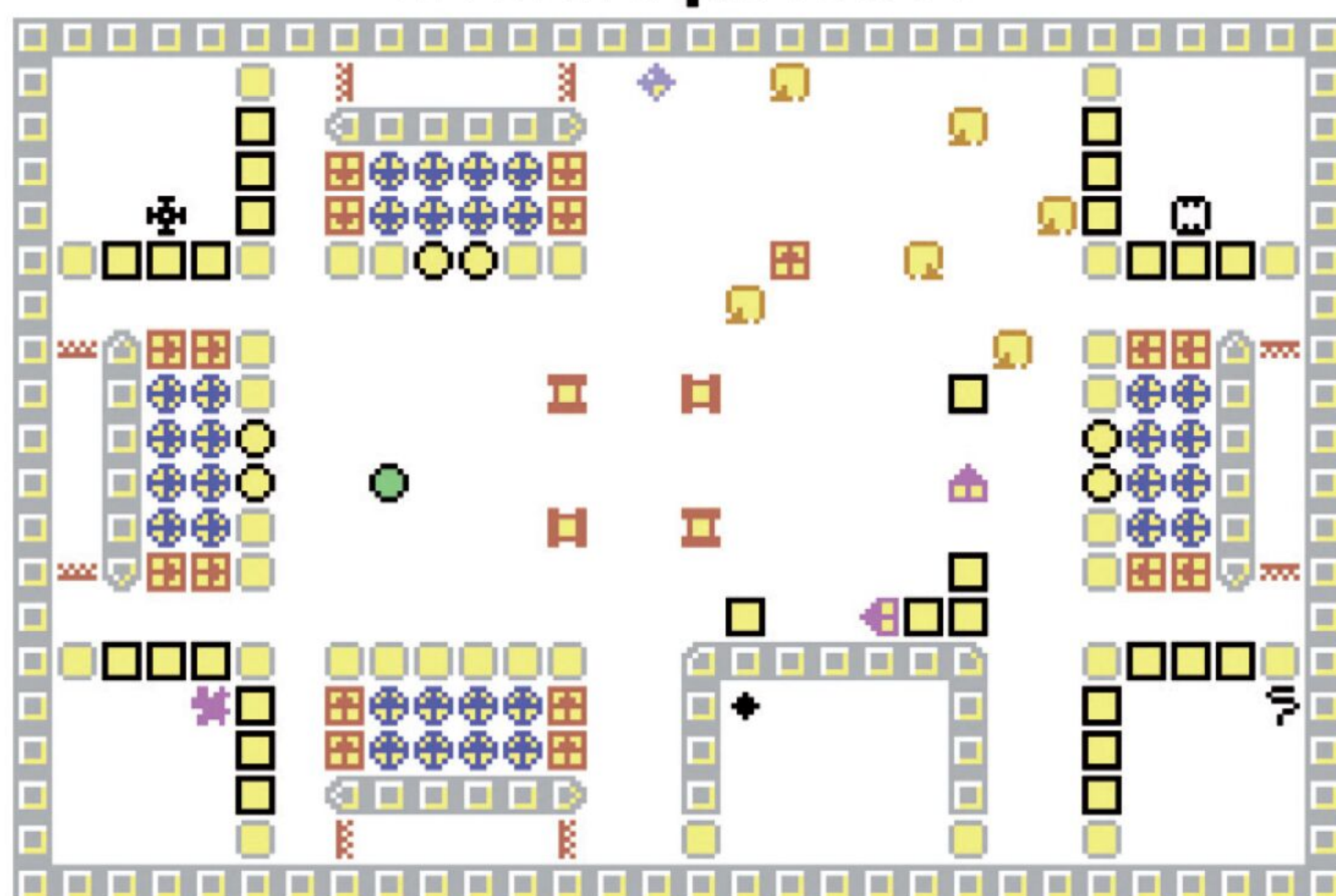
TEST

Use the sticky block



Well done!

Just for practice



Diamonds: 1

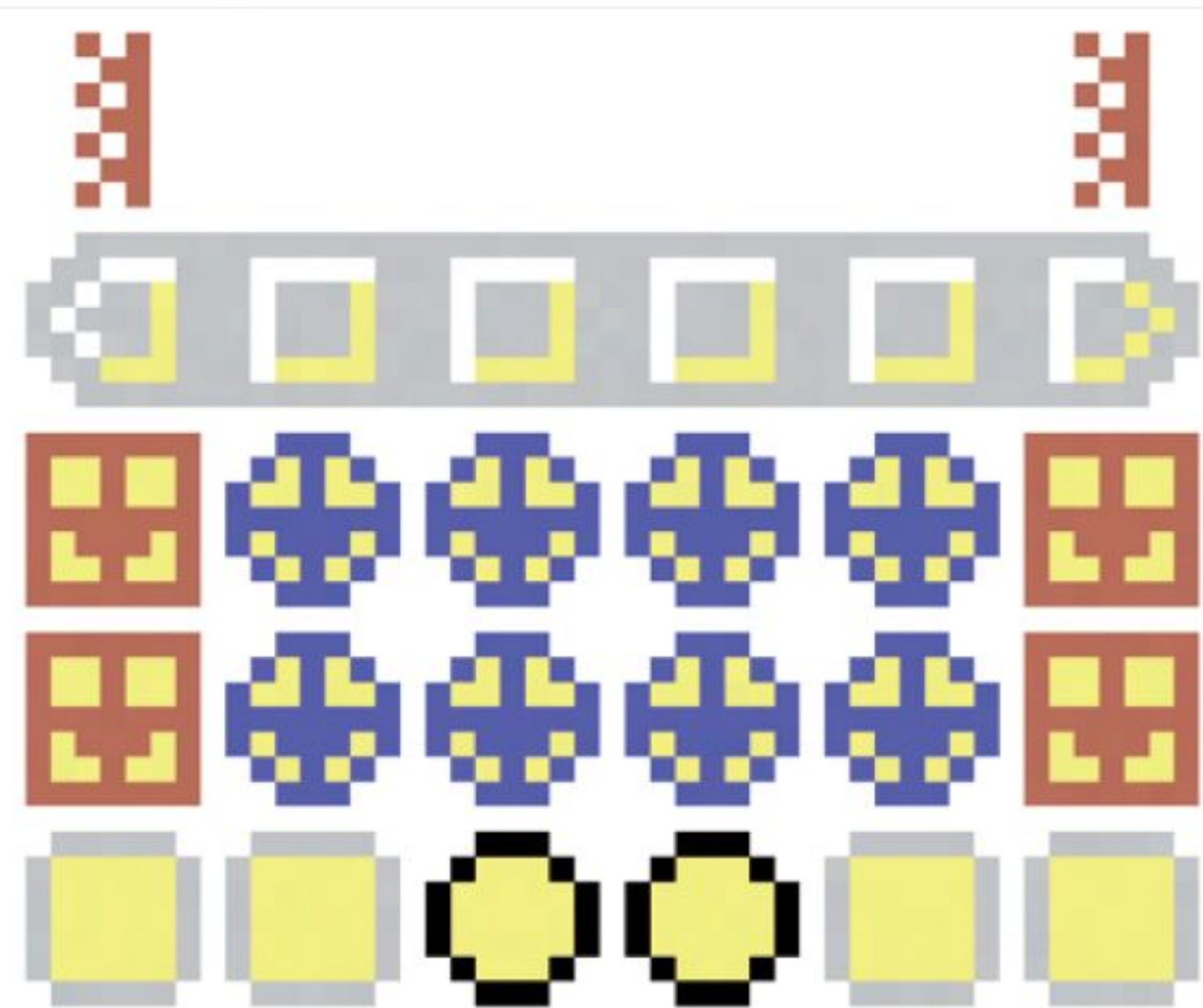
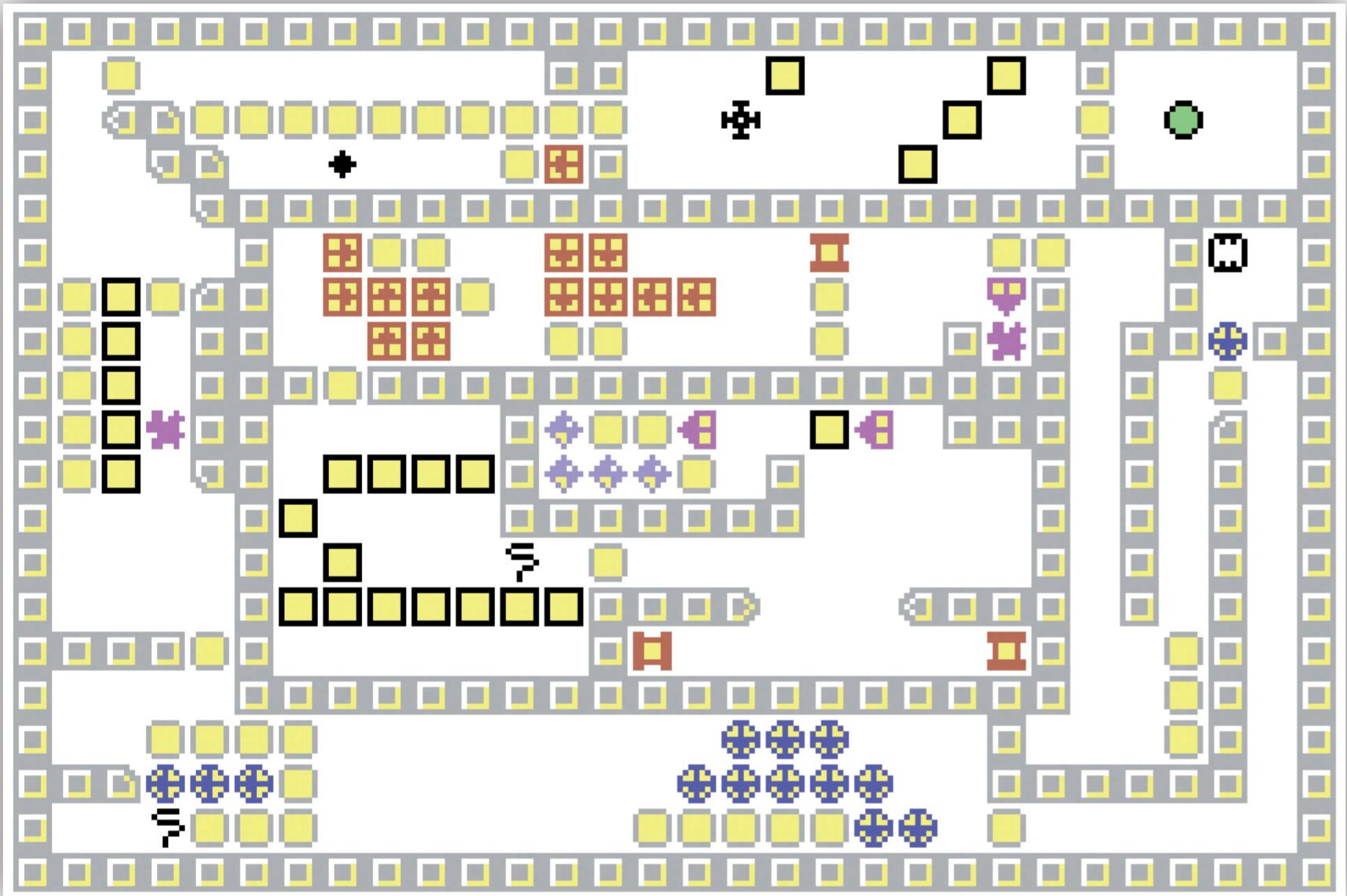
Lives: 3

Someone, please tell me why I put my name down for this one? My head hurts! Having said that, Kye is more inviting than most games of this type, and that's because you can start on any level you like. For me, this meant trying different levels until I found one I could understand, then progressing from there. Kind of reverse-engineering the game, if you like. Once I started to understand what I was doing, I had a much better time. Why can't all brain-benders be so welcoming? This user-friendly design meant I went from dying hard to saying "Yippee-Kye-Yay"!



"DIAMOND MINES AND CRAFTY MONSTERS, HMM ..."





Unlike Paul, putting my name down for this one was a given, but in the same breath, I'm glad to see my erstwhile colleague actually enjoyed a puzzler! And puzzle you it will, as even the default levels get a bit tricky after the first couple. Thankfully, the restart option is only a button press away. The different blocks hinder your progress in numerous ways and serious logical thought is needed, but it's all a welcome fist pump away when a plan comes together. With the extra level packs added in from the PC original giving more than one hundred screens to battle through, this is going to take you a long time to conquer. Even better that there's no score and all are available right from the start, o-kye?



PRESENTATION: 84%

Lovely clean look, and you can play any level you want from the start.

GRAPHICS: 59%

Simplistic, yet bold and beautiful in their own soapy way.

SOUND: 75%

Bouncy music which, although not spectacular, feels appropriate.

HOOKABILITY: 77%

Depends on how your mind works – puzzle fans may be instantly enamoured.

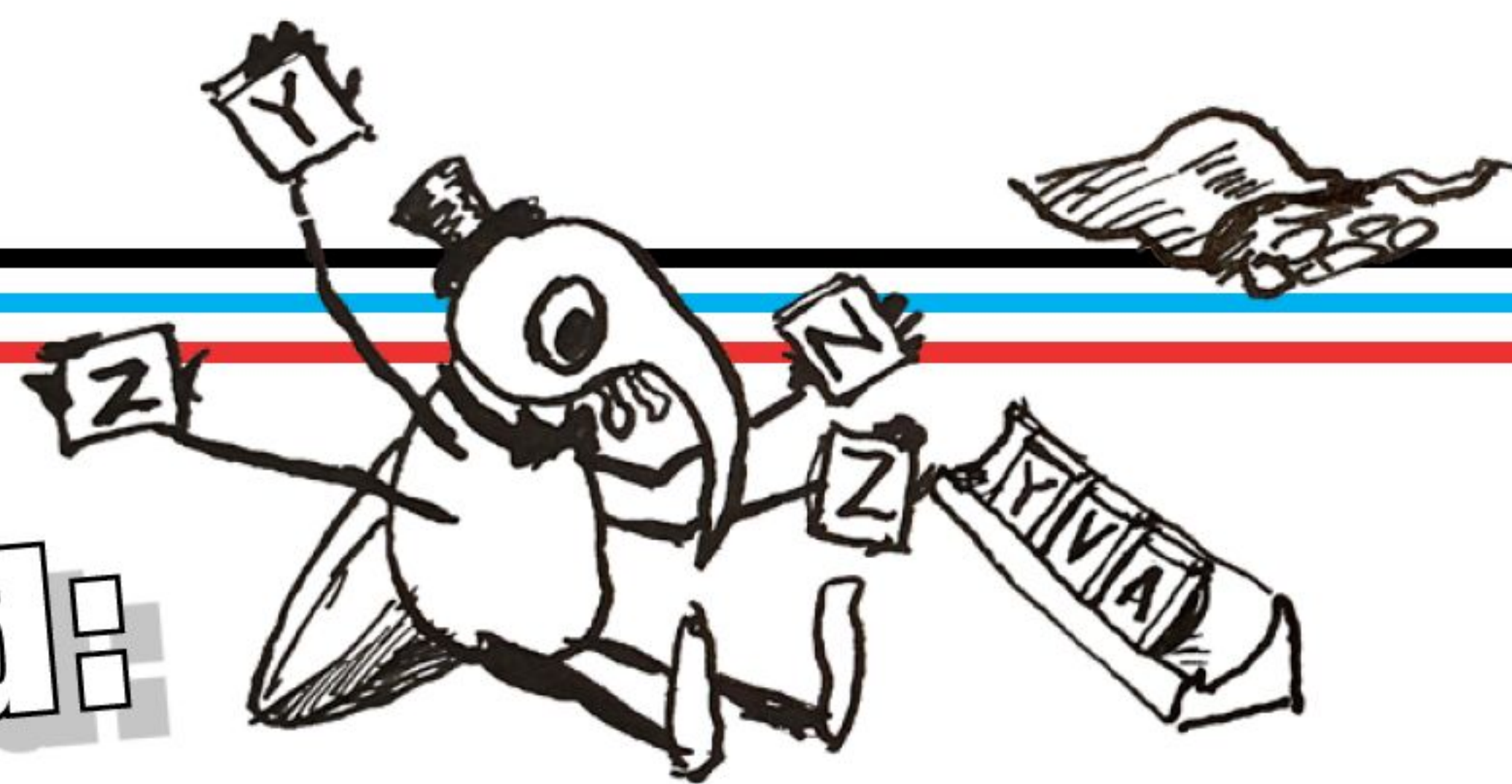
LASTABILITY: 84%

Once you get the hang of it, it's very compulsive.

OVERALL 81%

An orb-solutely refreshing take on the puzzle genre, which most should find orbsorbing.





Would you believe my wife says I always like to have the last word. Not true at all. Moving on, welcome to Ed'z Last Word! It's a way for us to bid a fond farewell to each issue. Ms Yva the Zyzzyva is ready, as am I. Mrs Editor, not so much. With that riskily said, and a big ol' spank you very much to everyone who contributed to the very nicely flowing Issue #16, here's some closing thoughts as our tears also prepare to flow.



Trooper Party Pooper

As I say in our *Meet The Reviewers* intro, we think it's incredible there are any games being released for a four decades young computer. So I confess, I feel like we're being a bit unfair when we pick a previously unreleased game such as *Trooper* for *Games That Weren't But Are Now...* annd then give it a low score.

Well, that's my heart talking. But I'm also keenly aware that if you dear reader choose to spend your time or money or both on a game, regardless of how it came about, you'd like it to be worth that time and money. Which is when I remember **why we do what we do**. And that's my brain talking. Actually my mouth. Well, my fingers. You get it.



CIA U L8R

How cool is it that that same 40-year old computer now has a replacement available for every major chip that made it what it was 15,000 days ago. This means we can now build completely new versions of The Great Beige One. More on that soon...

But, a big spanky botty to David Simmons for not picking up on this monumental C64 Newsflash for the, erm, "Newsflash" segment. Actually I'm sorry David, that's unfair of me – perhaps too much diaper changing on my mind. Which coincidentally is what I needed when I found out the J-CIAs had launched.

Fish & SIDs



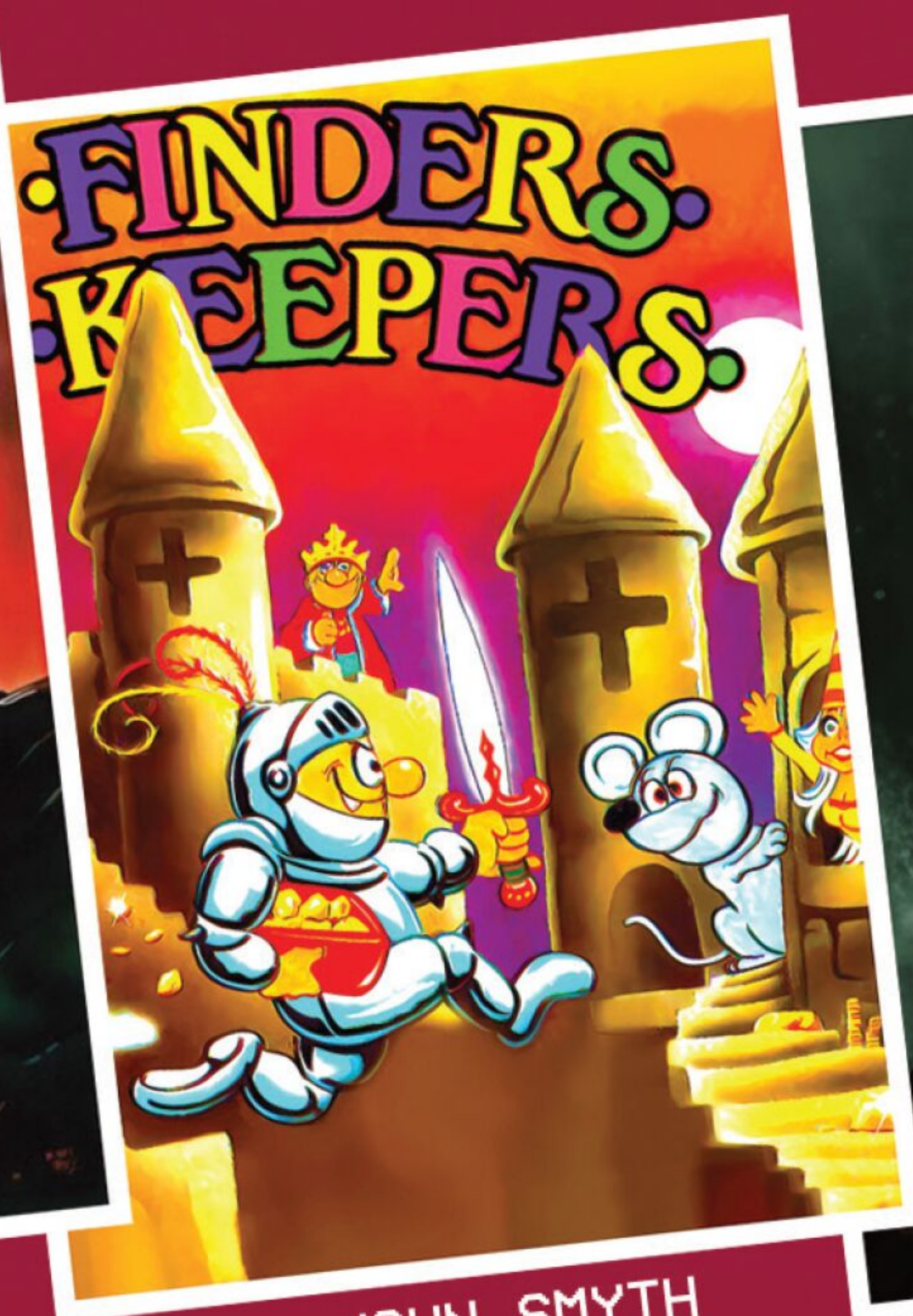
My – err I mean Professor Strain's article provoked a mass debate here at ZZAP! Towers about which SID version – or replacement – is best. Some felt that if blindfolded, most exberks wouldn't be able to say which version they were listening to, whilst others said the original 8580 chip was most consistent and had the best filter tricks, whilst yet others preferred the unpredictable nature of the original and beautifully buggy 6581. We all agreed on one thing though. He's SIDly the best. But not as good as you dear reader. See you next time! Chip chip cheerio!

OLIVER
FREY





OLIVER FREY



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